

**NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 24 JANUARY 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
 Liz Ridley, Assistant Director of Planning & Improvement
 Julie King, Assistant Director of People Services
 Matt Lloyd, Assistant Director of Safer Communities
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager
 Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant
 Alyson Lumb, Executive Support Officer

Apologies: None.

		Action
01/24	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held 13 December 2023</p> <p>The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were approved as an accurate record</p>	
02/24	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>238/23 Fire Cadets</u> It was noted that a funding bid of £20,000 had recently been submitted via the Worshipful Company of Firefighters. Tesco were also currently running a 'blue counter' scheme for Fire Cadets at their Uckfield store.</p>	
03/24	<p>Action Points from Matrix</p> <p><u>236/23 Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 3 2023/24</u> DCFO had circulated the outcomes of the Cyber Security report to SLT. Action complete.</p> <p><u>244/23 SLT Forward Plan & FA/Member Seminar Forward Plan</u> ADoPS advised that there were still 7 HMI Culture & Value submissions to be completed, only 2 of which were related to FRS's in respects to misconduct and DBS. CFO provided a summary of the DBS position following a recent discussion at Culture Club. Details would be formally run past the Monitoring Officers with regards to any compliance issues. Action complete.</p> <p><u>246/23 Sharepoint (AOB)</u> ADoR/T provided an update following the last Project Board meeting with regards to adoption ring 3. Noting that there were a variety of dependencies that would shape this next phase, including Future Foundations, the Internal Audit on Governance and Project Management together with the forthcoming report around records retention, it felt right to pause until this info became available to allow the project to be re-set onto the right course and identify a date for the GW2 Business Case. CFO enquired about the current timeline, training progress and ensuring a clear comms message was shared with staff. CMM had begun work on this already and would follow up with ADoR/T outside the meeting to draft an initial message, which would be followed up at a later stage with further details. DCFO would look at the wider solution and roll out and liaise with ADoSC to ensure this included station staff.</p>	<p>ADoR/T /CMM Feb 24</p>

04/24	<p>Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 Monitoring at Month 9</p> <p>The Finance Manager provided an overview of the Month 8 Budget monitoring report which had recently been presented to Members of the Policy & Resources Panel on 18 January 2024. There was a forecast revenue underspend of £42,000 and increase of £35,000 since Month 6.</p> <p><u>People Servies</u> were reporting an overspend of £79,000 which included a budget error in Payroll and Pensions of £98,000. There was an overspend of £72,000 in STC mainly due to on-call training and instructor overtime and vacancies.</p> <p><u>Resources</u> was showing an underspend of £57,000, noting CCTV savings had been delivered earlier than anticipated and an FRIC rebate received increasing the underspend since Month 6 by £19,000.</p> <p><u>Planning & Improvement</u> was reporting an underspend of £132,000 largely due to vacancies in PIT and Comms, with a further underspend on webcasting and members allowances.</p> <p><u>Safer Communities</u> had an overspend of £842,000 due to CRM savings pressure, wholtime pay and overtime. On average, the service was over establishment by an average of 13.16 FTE.</p> <p><u>Operational Support and Resilience</u> reported an overspend of £19,000 with pressures on hydrants (£105,000), JFC (£41,000), restructuring costs in Engineering (£43,000) and vehicle maintenance and repairs (£146,000) offset by underspends in equipment (£188,000), vacancies (£86,000) and fuel (£49,000).</p> <p>The corporate contingency was currently £222,000 underspent, offsetting overspends elsewhere in the budget. Treasury Management was forecast to underspend by £723,000. Non delegated costs including ill health retirements and unfunded pension costs were forecast to overspend by £275,000. Additional funding of £159,000 was also forecast.</p> <p>The Finance Manager also provided an update on the Capital underspend which had reduced by £224,000 since Month 6 to £4.178m.</p> <p>With regards to Period 9, the Safer Communities overspend was now £887,000, which was an increase in £45,000 since last month. FTC and on-call hours had increased.</p> <p>Reserves drawdown of £5.724m meant a forecast balance of £8.736m as at 31 March 2024, down from a peak of £26m reported in March 2019.</p>	
05/24	<p>Call Over</p> <p>The following report was not called over, and therefore all recommendations contained within them were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Pay Policy Statement 2024-25 	
06/24	<p>Service Planning and Budget Summary Update (section moved to conf)</p> <p>ADoR/T provided a verbal update on the current position, and CFO shared a</p>	

	<p>background summary following the recent Policy & Resources Panel meeting on 18 January 2024.</p> <p>Details of the Local Government Finance Settlement had still not been received (ADoR/T was able to provide a summary update after the meeting) nor had details on the Protection Uplift grant or Business Rates figures. Any updates received prior to the Fire Authority meeting on 8 February 2024 would be added and recorded within general balances.</p> <p>SLT had a short discussion over the agenda items ahead of the Members Seminar due to take place on 25 January 2024.</p>	
07/24	<p>Internal Audit Plan 2024/25</p> <p>Paul Fielding, Principal Auditor provided an outline draft audit plan for 2024/25, whilst being mindful of the upcoming HMICFRS Inspection due to commence in January 2025. SLT considered and discussed the topics proposed by ADoR/T.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Financials – due to the postponement of MBOS • FireWatch review and interface with Oracle ahead of MBOS implementation • Counter Fraud Assessment – review of counter fraud and awareness across the service • Cultural overarching review plus an independent review of some individual cases (also useful ahead of HMI Inspection). ADoPS would be mindful to include any learning outcomes • Disciplinary piece – ADoPS • Internal Comms and feedback mechanism – frequency of use – CMM • Post project review of CRM (to include risk reduction) added to long list for now. <p>Paul Fielding also noted the increase in day rate from £365 to £379 from 1 April 2024 based on a 70-day plan.</p>	
08/24	<p>Annual Pay Policy Statement 2024/25</p> <p>The Localism Act 2011 imposes a duty on relevant local authorities to prepare pay policy statements for each financial year, beginning with 2012/13. The statement must be approved by 31 March 2024.</p> <p>This paper 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 recommend to the Fire Authority to approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement.</p>	
09/24	<p>Cycle to Work Scheme</p> <p>ADoPS outlined the options for the renewal of the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Cycle to Work Scheme, to align with the current market and open availability to electric cycles.</p> <p>The current limit of the scheme is £1,000 which was agreed in 2010/11 as it</p>	

	<p>was originally the national scheme limit and ECs were not widely available. With inflation, particularly over the last 5 years due to the pandemic and Brexit, the cost of cycles has increased by up to 40% according to the Association of Cycle Traders. This has meant the original limit further restricts the options available to participants.</p> <p>This paper proposes three potential uplifts for the new scheme limit, £5,000, £4,000, and £2,000. The first two limits will offer access to the EC market, the third will update the scheme to offer a similar offering to what was available when first adopted.</p> <p>ADoR/T flagged some potential risks and admin burden in terms of workload and related cash flow implications. It was agreed to place a cap on the number of applications that can be approved in each period and also ensure this was incorporated into leavers process. There was also a need to resolve the procurement supplier issue ahead of awarding the contract.</p> <p>SLT agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. increase the limit for the C2W scheme to £5,000 in line with other local authorities and providing the opportunity for participants to access the electric cycle market. 2. the term offered to participants as 12-24 months, which reduces the risk a participant will leave during the repayment period whilst offering reduced monthly payments due to the higher scheme limit. Details of the cap to manage affordability and admin costs would also be included. 3. not to offer third-party financing of the scheme due to the expected number of participants and the cash position of ESFRS. This will maximise the financial benefits and reduce internal resource to administer the scheme. 4. ADoR/T and ADoPS proposing a cap on the number of successful applications a year to ensure the maximum liability is affordable. 	
<p>10/24</p>	<p>Safer Communities Action Plan</p> <p>ADoSC provided a verbal presentation (in addition to the PowerPoint circulated) on the current financial position, highlighting where one-off pressures had been removed and one-off savings added. Pressures that can be targeted for reduction were outlined, including reduce sickness and other absence; set training extraction max number and working practices.</p> <p><u>People</u>: It was concluded that there had been a policy drift in respect to the management of light duties, which should only last for a period of 12 weeks. As part of the HR & OD Managers plan to improve sickness, a number of OH meetings and discussions had taken place. The addition of a minimum lead in time for changes/movements to take place from the point of PCF would also assist. ADoPS provided a training/OH update and details of the location/availability of OH appts, which would be fed into the work being carried out by Enfuse.</p> <p><u>OSR</u>: ADoOSR provided an update on standbys – 15mins holding rule re-enforced and adoption of DCT for standby's prioritised. There was a workshop planned with FBU Reps in February to cover the DCT roadmap</p>	

	<p>ahead of the centralised crewing go live for standby element of DCT in March 2024. There was anxiety from some FBU members, which was acknowledged. SLT also held a short discussion around JFC.</p>	
11/24	<p>SLT Forward Plan 2022 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 3 agenda items for the Members Seminar on 25 January 2024 were confirmed as IT Outsourcing Tender Process; Budget Proposals and Introduction to On-Call.</p>	
12/24	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Home Office research interviews – Operational Independence</u> CFO asked for SLT thoughts ahead of attending an interview. It was felt useful to have a clear definition and when it should be utilised.</p> <p><u>SRF National Risk</u> CMM raised awareness for SLT to advise that risk 45 had been raised from a 2 to 5 on the risk register - local waste management sites.</p> <p><u>NFCC Strategic CPD Masterclasses</u> SLT felt that a joint SLT session was not needed, it was down to individuals or small groups to book on any that are of interest to them.</p> <p><u>Foster Carer Recruitment</u> ESCC were running a campaign on foster care and there had been a request for ESFRS to put up posters and share on social media. CMM would speak with Chairman.</p> <p><u>Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group (EESG) Sustainability Charter</u> DCFO confirmed this had been built into position statement and Members advised. It was also bound into the action plan and sustainability charter. CFO signed the Charter.</p> <p><u>NFCC Extreme Weather outcome</u> CFO had recently met with the NFCC Policy Team, who were drafting a NFCC Policy position, which would be fed back to the Public Accounts Committee. It was noted that statutory duty, better intelligence and stronger partnerships from Government were needed. CFO would circulate the final document upon receipt.</p> <p><u>NFCC Direct Entry</u> CFO noted the additional funding of £20,000, which would ease the burden on the budget going forward.</p>	
13/24	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on 21 February 2024</p>	