

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters at 10.30 hours on Thursday 3 June 2010.

Present: Councillors Belsey, Carden, Freebody, Harmer-Strange, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Kemble (Chairman), Kenward, Livings, Marsh, Pidgeon, Pragnell, Rufus, Scott, Sparks and Waite. Mrs Redman, Chair of the Standards Panel, and Mr Wheeler, Independent Person and Member of the Standards Panel, were also present

1. East Sussex Fire Rescue Service Operational Assessment Peer Review Outcomes

1.1 The Fire Authority has considered an oral update which provided a preliminary overview of the outcomes of the Operational Assessment Peer Review which had taken place during 24 – 27 May 2010.

1.2 The team had not produced a finalised report, but had provided Principal Officers and Heads of Department with a précis of their findings. The team had been complimentary about a wide range of work the Service had carried out and, in particular, noted that the Learning & Development Team was of Gold Standard.

2. Initial Proposals For Addressing the Likelihood of Increasing Financial Constraints being placed upon the Public Sector with particular reference to ESFRS

2.1 The Fire Authority has considered a report that updated Members on the latest information with regard to Government announcements on the current financial position for the public sector and to consider options for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service in making preparations for a tighter financial climate

2.2 Members were informed that Chancellor George Osborne had announced reductions of approximately £6.2 billion to be made during the current financial year. The Government Department most affected was the Department for Communities and Local Government, with in-year savings of £780 million to be made. The coalition Government had made it clear that the deficit reduction programme was to take precedence over any of the other measures contained within their 'Programme for Government' document.

2.3 Members were informed that the Corporate Management Team was preparing for a much tighter financial climate and was considering options for the future financial sustainability of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The Service Prioritisation Programme had begun and would be actively considered by Members, Corporate Management Team and Heads of Function over the next three months.

3. Note of the Policy & Resources, Scrutiny & Audit and Standards Panel Meetings held since the last meeting of the Fire Authority

3.1 The Fire Authority considered a report which provided details of the Panel meetings held since the last meeting of the Fire Authority with regard to those issues of greater significance or requiring a decision from the Fire Authority.

3.2 Members resolved that the revised Member Allowance Scheme recommended by the Independent Remuneration Advisory Group as set out in the Report be approved.

4. Member Lead Update on Learning & Development (Members)

4.1 The Fire Authority considered an update from Councillor Thomas (Member Lead for Learning & Development (Members)) on Learning and Development matters and progress as at 31 March 2010.

4.2 Members were informed that a framework which set out arrangements for responsibilities, planning, induction, financial resources, review and evaluation had been developed to provide a clear structure that could be evidenced. It was noted that the Members' Group was now well established and that the Member Lead Group was going well. All Councillors had now received a personal interview with ACO Rolph which was helpful in order to produce development plans and a costed training plan.

4.3 Members resolved that the Member Lead Update for the final quarter 2009/10 be noted and the Members' Learning and Development Action Plan and Learning and Development Framework be approved.

5. Budget Monitoring and Projected Outturn

5.1 The Fire Authority considered a joint report that advised on the draft outturn position for 2009/10. The draft outturn for 2009/10 matches the agreed Revenue Budget after the transfer of £0.008m from Balances, as previously approved, to contribute towards additional costs related to the Marlie Farm incident. Effectively, the budget balances within existing resources. The Fire Authority noted that the draft Statement of Accounts will be presented to the Scrutiny and Audit Panel at its meeting on 24 June 2010 for approval prior to audit. The approved capital programme for 2009/10 was £3.515m, and the position at outturn was £2.853m. Slippage was being carried forward into 2010/11 of £0.492m and an underspend of £0.170m that would not be required. The Fire Authority also approved a variation to the 2010/11 Capital Programme.

3 June 2010
TED KEMBLE
Chairman