

## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

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**Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove at 10.30 hours on Thursday 15 June 2017.**

Present: Councillors Barnes (Chairman), Elford, Galley, Lambert, Morris, O'Quinn, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Scott, Smith, Taylor, Theobald (Vice Chairman) and Tutt.

N.B. Councillors Bennett and Stogdon attended the meeting in place of Councillors Dowling and Sheppard, who had temporarily resigned from the Fire Authority.

A minutes silence was held by Members, officers and the public to pay tribute to the victims of the Grenfell Tower.

The agenda and non-confidential reports can be read on the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's website at <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/east-sussex-fire-authority/fire-authority-meetings/> A brief synopsis and the decisions relating to key items is set out below.

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIR**

1.1 The Fire Authority elected Councillor Barnes as its Chairman and Councillor Theobald as its Vice-Chairman.

### **2. URGENT ITEMS AND CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

#### **2.1 New Members**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Dowling, Elford, Osborne, Smith and Tutt to the Fire Authority.

#### **2.2 Grenfell Tower**

Officers will provide Members with a position statement with a full briefing on policy and risk to be provided at a later date.

### **3. TREASURY MANAGEMENT – STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR 2016/17**

3.1 Treasury Management Activities are regulated by various codes, statutes and guidance, including: Local Government Act 2003; Statutory Instrument 3146 2003; Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities; and under the Act, Investment Guidance to structure and regulate and Authority's investment activities. The Annual Treasury Management Stewardship is a requirement of the Fire Authority's reporting procedures and covers Treasury activity for 2016/17, including Prudential Indicators.

3.2 Members were advised that the Fire Authority had complied with its approved Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for the year.

- 3.3 The Bank of England base rate was cut from 0.50% to 0.25% on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The average rate of interest the Authority received through Treasury Management activity was 0.52%, which reflected the continuing prioritisation of security and liquidity over yield.
- 3.4 There was no new borrowing in 2016/17 with the total loan debt outstanding remaining at £10.973m, the average interest rate being 4.61%. The outturn of the Fire Authority's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the underlying need to borrow, is £10,973m.
- 3.5 Members resolved to note the report.

4. **EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE IT STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer presented the proposed new IT strategy for East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The Strategy was building upon work that had been previously carried out by external consultants Spirit Acuity and has gained approval by the Corporate Management Team and Policy & Resources Panel.
- 4.2 The Strategy aimed to provide the Service with a long term view of how the underlying IT of the Fire Service could be adaptable and flexible to satisfy business need. To formulate the Strategy, Officers concentrated on establishing the direction of travel across key technology areas and mapped to a solid framework of activity which will incrementally unlock desired business outcomes.
- 4.3 Existing funding of £7m will not be sufficient to fully support the forecast cost of £8.8m and will need the Fire Authority to identify additional funding through the budget setting process for 2018/19. Funding will pose a challenge although the Strategy deals with this by putting in realistic funding requirements and not overly hedging ambition. Individual business cases would now be developed for all new projects in the Strategy before final approval for any investment was given.
- 4.4 The IT strategy will be integrated into business and programme planning. The Service has appointed telent as its IT delivery partner which will ensure that IT is a key enabler to support change at the business pace required.
- 4.5 The Strategy is one part of the Service's IMD Transformation Programme and sits alongside service delivery being outsourced to telent Technology Services Ltd, a number of transformation milestones to improve IT infrastructure and establishing a strong client side team and new governance structures. The Strategy will be subject to extensive consultation with service managers ensuring it meets the needs of the business with projects to be prioritised by the Corporate Management Team. Councillor Penn asked Officers to elaborate on the scale of the IT strategy, whether it was full transformation or modernisation and whether the software would be compatible with business partner's software, such as Orbis. The Assistant Director advised Members that the key was getting the basics right to provide a resilient platform to industry standards which would allow us to grow and transform our IT and our business outcomes. The Strategy would enable the Service to streamline its processes and the implementation of strong governance would strengthen its approach. Compatibility and interoperability with partners would be a key consideration.

- 4.6 Members resolved to:
- a) approve the IT Strategy 2017-22 to include the use of existing funding of £7m for its delivery;
  - b) note that further funding would be identified through the budget setting process and review of the Capital Asset Strategy for 2018/19; and
  - c) note that regular reports on the delivery of the IT Strategy would be presented to Scrutiny & Audit.

**5. INCLUSION, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2017-2021**

- 5.1 Members have been informed that the Inclusion & Diversity Strategy forms part of suite of strategies that sits within the Fire Authority Constitution. The strategy was due for review during March 2017 which has resulted in a reviewed and refreshed document with an updated strategic direction drawing out the main drivers for change over the next 4 year period and beyond.
- 5.2 The Service's purpose states: "We make our communities safer". The revised strategy supports this purpose by ensuring we develop a multi –skilled, safe and valued workforce, are able to educate our communities and deliver high performing services and aims to create the following:
- a diverse workforce which is more representative of the communities we serve;
  - a culturally competent organisation truly valuing and embracing differences of all kinds , enabling us to create sustainable relationships and develop stronger diverse community engagement that drives down risk in our communities;
  - an inclusive workforce where people can be comfortable and confident in who they are, unlocking potential and performing at their best; and
  - we will have robust monitoring and reporting that allows us to accurately measure progress and success.
- 5.3 The Strategy has been aligned to the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan to ensure it underpins organisational commitments ensuring a clear link to the Service's purpose.
- 5.4 Councillor Scott noted the Service had come along way but felt minority groups were under represented and that more should be done, both within the Service and within County's political arena. It was acknowledged that some groups were harder to reach and that how the Service engaged with those communities would be key.
- 5.5 Members resolved to support and adopt the revised Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2017-2021.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN BARNES  
CHAIRMAN OF EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**

30 June 2017

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