

## EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

---

**Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at County Hall, St. Anne's Crescent, Lewes BN7 1UE at 10:30 hours on Thursday 7 September 2017.**

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

N.B. Councillor Pragnell attended the meeting in place of Councillor Dowling, who had temporarily resigned from the Fire Authority.

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. **2018/19 STRATEGIC SERVICE PLANNING AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**
- 1.1 The report set out the financial context for the service planning process, through an update of the Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP). The review process sought to determine how best to deliver the Authority's purpose "to make our communities safer", its supporting commitments, its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), and the targets and priorities that underpinned them.
- 1.2 With sustained reductions in public sector funding and the consequent need to deliver significant savings, Members and Officers will need to ensure that the service planning process delivered sustainability in the medium term for both revenue and capital budgets and the Service as a whole.
- 1.3 The MTFP had been updated when the 2017/18 Budget was set in February 2017 and a balanced budget was forecast through to 2021/22 although it was acknowledged that central funding was uncertain for 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- 1.4 Since 2010/11, the Authority has planned to make savings totalling £8.645m, of which £8.128m would be delivered by the end of 2017/18. Savings had been identified through a range of initiatives and Members were provided with details of the potential risks that could impact on the Authority's ability to deliver its budget plans over the medium term. This included the ability to deliver existing savings as set out within the MTFP; the national pay award for grey book staff in excess of the current provision; and uncertainty about future governance and funding.
- 1.5 Members were advised that between 2010/11 and 2017/18, revenue settle grant had reduced by £10.149m, or 69% and the rolled forward MTFP made the underlying assumption of further reduction of £2,176m to £2.025m by 2022/23. Business rate revaluation was not known so business rates assumption would remain static.

- 1.6 Members resolved to approve the updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2018/19 to 2022/23 and its underlying assumptions.

2. **EFFICIENCY STRATEGY AND PLAN**

- 2.1 Members were provided with an update on the delivery of the Authority's existing Efficiency Plan and its proposed approach to identifying future efficiencies.
- 2.2 To gain access to the four year funding settlement from 2016/17 – 2019/20, the Government required the Fire Authority to submit an Efficiency Plan for approval, in which the Home Office set out a specified range of information to be included.
- 2.3 Approval was given by the Fire Minister and as such, the Fire Authority committed to publish a commentary on progress of the Efficiency Plan.
- 2.4 Since 2010/11, the Fire Authority has made savings totalling £8.650m, of which £6.708m were delivered by the end of 2016/17. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) showed a balanced budget in 2018/19 and 2019/20 with a need to deliver additional savings of £1.6m by 2022/23.
- 2.5 The Authority have had a number of approaches to identifying and delivering savings and efficiencies, which are not sufficient on their own. This is due to the factors driving the requirement for the Authority to evolve its approach, such as: the Fire Reform Agenda, the statutory duty to collaborate with emergency services, the Fire Authorities commitment to make effective use of its resources, the approval of the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP); and the renewed commitment to collaboration.
- 2.6 Members resolved to approve the progress update on the published efficiency plan and the proposed approach to identifying future efficiencies.

3. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2017/18**

- 3.1 Members considered a report on issues arising from the monitoring of the 2017/18 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 31 July 2017.
- 3.2 Members were advised that whilst the Revenue budget was currently forecast to be overspent by £6,000 it was still half way through the financial year in terms of this reported figure and certainty would increase with time as more data became available. The overall Capital Programme was projected to be underspent by £214,000 and the Capital Programme was forecast to be underspent by £1,546,000 due to slippage on appliances and other vehicles. The Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer advised this particular slippage was due to a review of vehicles purchased to ensure they were fit for purpose and best value for money.

- 3.3 Members raised concern on the overspend showing for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and asked for an explanation. The overspend is largely due to a contractual issue. The contract with the supplier was coming to an end and Officers were entering discussions with the supplier to try and resolve the issue, and identify alternative ways to reduce costs.
- 3.4 Members resolved to note the risks to the projected Revenue Budget overspend; the risks to the projected slippage and underspend in the Capital Programme; the use of reserves; the monitoring of savings taken in 2017/18; and the current year investments.
- 4 **PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017 – 2022**
- 4.1 Members considered a report about the existing People and Organisational Development Strategy which had been due for review in March 2017. The reviewed and refreshed Strategy included an updated strategic direction drawing out the main drivers for change over the next 5 year period.
- 4.2 Members resolved to support the implementation of the revised People and Organisational Development Strategy for 2017-2022

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

7 September 2017

•