

## **AVON FIRE AUTHORITY**

**25 SEPTEMBER 2019**

### **NOTES OF MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Butters, Clough, Davies (Chair), Hopkinson, Jones, Lake, Massey, Myers, Payne and Tucker.

The meeting started at 6.00pm.

#### **22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ashe, Davis, Eddy, Goggin, Jacobs, Johnson, Monk, Phipps, Shearn and Windows

#### **23. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery Support) (ACFO (SDS)) outlined the emergency evacuation arrangements.

#### **24. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllr Massey declared that in Item 18 having worked for BT for a number of years she was in receipt of a pension.

#### **25. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AVON FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2019**

**RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the annual meeting of the Avon Fire Authority held on 27 June 2019 should be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **26. CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair thanked all Officers and members of staff who assisted with the Emergency Services Open Day. The day was very successful and worthwhile, and a good advert for the Service.

#### **27. PUBLIC ACCESS**

One statement had been received on behalf of the Woodland Grove Community Group in Bath. The group raised their concerns regarding a waste management site close to residential homes. The AFA were asked to consider the loopholes identified in the law and regulations.

Neil Liddington, Area Manager, Risk Reduction, confirmed that he had visited the site in question and would support the Woodland Grove Community Group going forward.

### **Presentation of Chief Fire Officer Commendations**

At this point in the meeting the ACFO (SDS) read out the following commendations:

Early evening 3<sup>rd</sup> May on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019 a severe fire was reported in the Strachan and Henshaw building on Deep Pit Road, Speedwell. The first responding crews were confronted with a developing fire that was smoke logging the whole of this large building complex. Shortly after arrival the fire spread to the whole of the building resulting in numerous explosions and a severe conflagration. The professionalism and bravery shown at this incident was exemplary, with crews working in areas of risk to stop the fire from spreading to neighbouring saveable properties, and tactically firefighting and evacuating residents. In upholding the true professionalism and bravery of Firefighting the following Officers, Corporate Staff, Crews and Control members deserve recognition of their actions on the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

The award of Chief Fire Officer Commendation was then presented to:

- Andy Baker – Crew Manager – *“For undertaking the initial Incident Command role and critical decision making at the time to stop further spread of fire and limit risk to Firefighters at the scene”*.
- Sarah Cooper – Watch Manager – *“For leading the Service Control room function and Service availability throughout this night shift and managing the risk critical nature of the early calls to this incident and providing risk reduction advice to members of the public and responding crews”*.
- Martin Bolt – Station Manager – *“For undertaking the first Flexi-Officer Incident Command role and maintaining the highest standards of safety for Firefighter’s on the incident ground”*.
- Karl Venn – Temporary/Station Manager – *“For undertaking a key role in the provision of safety on the incident ground and managing a very dynamic sector protecting neighbouring business and housing, whilst maintaining the safety of Firefighters and public”*.
- Richard Iles – Watch Manager – *“For showing true professionalism and foresight to take command of the Command Unit and lead the work of this unit under severe pressure during this incident and supporting the incident commanders in an exemplary manner”*.

- Assistant Chief Fire Officers Rob Davis and Simon Shilton – *“to acknowledge the exceptional work you undertook at the above incident. You took overall Command and under severe pressure from a rapidly developing major incident remained calm and professional providing risk critical decisions to limit harm to people, limiting damage to property and maintaining the highest standard of health, safety and welfare for Firefighters and other agencies on the Incident Ground”.*

## 28. MINUTES

The minutes of the Audit, Governance and Ethics Committee – Ordinary Meeting held on 31 May 2019 were noted.

The minutes of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee – Ordinary Meeting held on 4 September 2019 were noted.

Cllr Davies moved the recommendation in Minute 8 – Improvement Programme – and it was **AGREED that recommendations 3, 9/15, 10, 25/38, 43, 53, 55 and 60 from the Fire Authority’s 62 point action plan be marked as complete.**

## 29. URGENT ACTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 5.1

It was noted that the Acting Clerk, at the request of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and in consultation with the Chair of the Fire Authority had extended the temporary appointment of the Interim Treasurer to 31 December 2019.

## 30. NEW CONSTITUTION

The new Constitution was circulated. The Chair presented the Constitution which had been produced following a Member Working Group and subsequent discussions at meetings. New elements included a reduction in the number of Committees from five to three, and the inclusion of an Equality statement, Service Mission, Vision and Values.

Members were concerned that the document had not been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration. It was however acknowledged that Members had been party to discussions for meetings including as presented to the workshop on the 12th July 2019.

It was highlighted that it was an ongoing piece of work to be kept under review for changes to be made as required.

**RESOLVED, to APPROVE the revised Constitution, subject to any comments sent to the Chair before the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019.**

It was agreed that any comments would be reported to the next meeting and if any were substantial the matter would return for agreement. If administrative, the Clerk had the delegated power to implement.

### **31. FORWARD PLAN 2019/20**

Members were presented with the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the coming Municipal Year which set out the anticipated major decisions which will need to be taken by Members. Also circulated, were the key dates of meetings taking place within the calendar year.

It was confirmed that allocations of Members to Committees would be sent to Group Leaders with nominations invited.

It was requested that a date be added to the footer of the key dates document to aid version control.

**RESOLVED, to approve the Forward Plan 2019/20.**

### **32. BUDGET UPDATE AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Interim Treasurer presented the draft budget for the year 2020/21 and provided an update on the planned Medium Term Financial Plan for the four year period 2020/24.

It was noted that references in paragraphs 3.10 and 3.16 to Appendix B should read Appendix A, and those referenced as Appendix A could now be found as a background paper.

The MTFP forecasts were based on a number of key assumptions which each had seen developments in recent months as outlined within the report. These included; Central Government Funding, Firefighters Pension Scheme Section 31 Grant, Brexit, Employee Pay Awards, Council Tax Increases and Capital Financing Costs.

**RESOLVED, that the report be noted.**

### **33. REVENUE MONITOR AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019/20**

The Interim Treasurer provided Members with the first assessment of the forecast outturn position on the revenue and capital budgets and prudential indicators for 2019/20. A revenue budget forecast underspend of £181,000 was reported primarily due to savings on staff costs. Further risks were outlined along with actions of mitigation taken.

Information was provided about the fleet capital programme for 2019/20 which had been delayed as the previous supplier went into administration. It was proposed that funds be allocated for 2018/19 and 2019/20 which total £2.5 million and this would impact the proposed funding for investment in digital technologies for the next two years. It was estimated that the new appliances would be available after June 2020.

In response to queries it was confirmed that the new appliances would be compliant with the clean air zones planned for the Bath and North East Somerset area, and any planned in Bristol. Where necessary, there would be an agreed replacement programme for non-compliant vehicles. It was requested and agreed that a report to the December meeting of the Fire Authority would outline any data and potential impact, giving opportunity to review and reflect.

It was proposed that the provision should be made through reserves to meet any new financial pressures as they arose and as such, it was proposed to reclassify the 'Invest to Save Reserve' as 'Invest to Save/ Financial Pressures Reserve'.

**RESOLVED to;**

- a) Approved the Revenue Budget adjustments as set out in the report and contained within appendix 2.**
- b) Approved the Capital Programme adjustments and revised 2019/20 Capital Programme of £7,701,000 as set out in the report.**
- c) Noted the latest forecast of expenditure on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.**
- d) Approved the Invest to Save Reserve being reclassified as an Invest to Save/ Financial Pressures Reserve.**
- e) A report would be presented to the December meeting outlining any data and potential impact, giving opportunity to review and reflect.**

**34. SERVICE DELIVERY - RISK REDUCTION UPDATE**

Members considered the update report which highlighted the work of the Risk Reduction Department.

With reference to the Strachan and Henshaw building fire in Speedwell it was reported that seven charges had been brought against the owner under the Regulatory Reform 'Fire Safety' Order 2005. Negotiations were ongoing.

The Water Safety Plan was welcomed as part of the campaign to raise awareness of water safety to young persons. Officers were thanked for their work to keep young people safe in vulnerable circumstances.

It was confirmed that a positive discussion had taken place regarding access to the river in Bath and a solution was imminent.

**RESOLVED, that the report be noted.**

**35. FIRES AND OTHER INCIDENTS**

Members considered the report which focused on the fires and incidents of interest to Members from 1 July 2019 to 29 August 2019 as well as the summary of proactive work undertaken by the Corporate Communication Team during this period.

The CFO referred members to Para 3.9 which described a major incident in a hotel on Wednesday 17 July near Cribbs Causeway and the Committee were shown images of the incident to support the narrative in the report.

Cllr Hopkinson thanked Avon Fire and Rescue Service (AF&RS) for all the work at the incident and efforts to protect the residents in houses surrounding the property. The Chair echoed the praise for the handling of the difficult incident which had been swiftly declared a major incident with a multi-agency approach. It was confirmed that traffic mitigation efforts had been professionally handled and well received.

**RESOLVED, that the report be noted.**

### **36. IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Steve Imrie, Area Manager (Internal Improvement Team), presented the report which sought approval for the formal closure of the Improvement Programme.

Members were provided with the background to the two-year improvement programme initiated in September 2017 and detail of the formal arrangements for the governance, scrutiny, challenge, progress reporting and programme management.

The Committee were given briefings on;

- Improvement Plan Progress
- Cultural Journey/ Plan Update
- HMICFRS Action Plan Update
- Cultural Change Film

The Chair highlighted the impact of austerity on fire prevention capabilities and on other emergency services in order to maximise front line responses.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that there were no 'HMICFRS league tables' published or otherwise. All Fire and Rescue services were assessed across three main areas with a third tranche due towards the end of the year.

Councillor Lake reported to the Committee on the Cultural Journey particularly with reference to the 'ensuring fairness and promoting diversity' element of the HMICFRS inspection action plan. The DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality) Team and Improvement Board were set up to work on both internal policy and practice and also undertake external community engagement. Councillor Lake outlined the work of DICE over the time period and sought clarity on the future plans for DICE. It was confirmed that the People and Culture Committee now had the responsibilities of the DICE framework within their Terms of Reference.

Information was provided about the cultural survey completed using quantitative and qualitative information and face to face engagement. The resulting document 'A Better Place to Work' was the commitment to cultural change for the foreseeable future. The activity had led to the creation of a film to articulate the journey and highlight the impact of the cultural change programme on all areas of the workforce. The vision was to launch it to the organisation on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 along with a programme of activity over the next 12 months to deliver key areas of work. There would be voiceover versions of the film in many different languages.

Members were impressed with the short film which was shown in exempt session as the license for the music behind the film was yet to be received.

**RESOLVED that the Fire Authority;**

- a) **Approved the formal closure of the Improvement Programme in accordance with its original two-year lifespan;**
- b) **Noted the progress made against HMICFRS inspection action plan (as considered by the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRSC) at its meeting on 4 September 2019); and**
- c) **Noted the progress reported in relation to the Service's ongoing cultural change programme.**

**37. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business on the grounds that they contained exempt information pursuant to Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3 of the Local Government Act 1972 and that in accordance with Schedule 12A, Part II, paragraph 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(At 7.35pm the Chair adjourned the meeting for a short break and resumed at 7.50pm)

**38. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

Exempt minutes of Fire Authority meeting held on 27 June 2019.

**RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed as a correct record.**

Exempt minutes of Extraordinary Employment Committee meeting held on 12 June 2019.

**RESOLVED that the minutes be noted**

**39. BT CONTRACT AWARD (WIDE AREA NETWORK)**

Tanya Nathan, Head of Procurement, provided information to the Committee regarding the contract award for the current BT WAN (Wide Area Network). The Procurement Team advised the most appropriate route to market and confirmed that the process had met all legal requirements.

**RESOLVED, the Committee**

**1) Approved the award of the BT WAN contract subject to the Chair considering the information of bid process to ensure the most effective and cheapest on the list.**

**2) That the relevant information would be appended to the exempt minutes of this meeting.**

**40. FLEET STOCK SPARES**

Tanya Nathan, Head of Procurement, outlined the background of the contract to manage and supply vehicle and plant spares, consumables and components.

**RESOLVED;**

**1) That the report be noted.**

**2) That an update report be provided to the Audit Committee at its March 2020 meeting**

**41. PROPERTY UPDATE – BUSINESS CASE FOR RE-DEVELOPMENT OF BATH AND WESTON FIRE STATIONS**

The Committee received a report which sought approval of the business case recommendations for the redevelopment of Bath and Weston Super Mare Fire Stations and approval of the proposed governance process for the purchase of the land where required.

**RESOLVED That the Fire Authority;**

**a) Approved the Business Case recommendation for the development of Bath Fire Station:**

**b) Approved the business case recommendation for the redevelopment of Weston-Super-Mare Fire Station:**

**c) Approved the proposed governance process for potential land purchase:**

**42. HR UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Members received an update.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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Chair