

AT A MEETING of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority
held at Fire & Police HQ, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 27th February, 2024

Chairman:

* Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE

* Councillor Zoe Huggins	* Councillor Hugh Lumby
* Councillor Fran Carpenter	* Councillor George Madgwick
* Councillor David Drew	* Councillor Derek Mellor
* Councillor Sally Goodfellow	* Councillor Roger Price
* Councillor David Harrison	
Councillor Karen Lucioni	* Present

229. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Karen Lucioni. An apology was also received from Donna Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner.

230. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful to disclose to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they may have in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, along with any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that Members wished to disclose.

231. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 5 DECEMBER 2023

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

232. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

233. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman shared that on the 5 December 2023 he and the Chief Fire Officer officially opened the new live fire training facilities at the Service Headquarters. The unit had been designed in conjunction with firefighters and was one of very few of its kind, offering firefighters from across HIWFRS and neighbouring services the opportunity to train in realistic, controlled situations, to learn how fire behaves in different conditions, and how best to respond.

It was confirmed that the independent review by Green Park into culture within HIWFRS had concluded. The findings and recommendations of the report were being considered and would enhance the work already underway. A progress report would come to a later Authority meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that he and other Members had recently completed the Service's mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and had been very impressed with the delivery. The Chairman had also attended an event run by the Service's Fire Proud network group marking the start of LGBTQ+ history month with a guest speaker, Katie Cornhill, sharing her affirmation story.

234. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENTS**

Members provided the following updates:

- Councillor Roger Price had visited Cosham Fire Station to see how it was progressing and was very impressed at the work being done. He had also attended an external reference group (ERG) Fire Inspectorate meeting.
- Councillor Sally Goodfellow had attended the live fire training event on 5 December as well as a Prince's Trust event at Redbridge Fire Station. Cllr Goodfellow had visited St Mary's Fire Station earlier in February on equality, diversion and inclusion (EDI) work that was ongoing and were keen to start a Cadets group. She had also attended EDI training for Members at Service Headquarters.
- Councillor George Madgwick shared how on behalf of Portsmouth City Council (PCC), he was looking for improvements to the access for the new Cosham Fire Station and would forward a report of PCC onto the Service.
- Councillor Fran Carpenter had attended the live fire training event as well as the Prince's Trust event at Redbridge Fire Station.
- Councillor Derek Mellor had visited Basingstoke Fire Station in December as well as the EDI training at Service Headquarters.
- Councillor David Drew shared how he had visited the 9/11 memorial in New York and thought it inspiring how art and creativity had been used by those who had suffered. Cllr Drew had also attended the Fire Christmas carol service.
- Councillor Zoe Huggins had attended the live fire training event and the Fire carol service. She had also met with the Waterlooville and Basingstoke Prince's Trust cohorts in her Children and Young People champion role.
- Councillor Hugh Lumby had attended the Gosport Passing Out event on the 6 December and Fire carol service.
- Councillor Rhydian Vaughan offered to forward on a report regarding the safe storage of lithium batteries to Members in case they were approached regarding storage in their local areas.

235. **BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENT 2024/25 INCLUDING MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 7 in the minute book)

The report was summarised by the officer, highlighting that a 2.99% increase had been assumed with Council Tax.

During questions of the report, the following points were clarified:

- The Fire Authority continued to be part of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC), and confirmed that a lot of research and development was done collectively to learn and improve. Zurich Municipal however continued to cover elements like Business Travel, Engineering Insurance and Engineering Inspection. FRIC continued to encourage and invite others to join the entity.
- Carbon reduction spending had been focused on electric vehicle charging points and improving building fabrics and the Carbon Trust was consulted in order to help assess the effectiveness of investments.
- It was confirmed that there was no 'fund' for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, as there is for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- Future efficiencies would be closely looked at, with the HR model being assessed as it moved in-house. The future employment of on-call firefighters was not a concern for expenditure due to the lower numbers and the increase being steady. The timescales required for the relevant training and onboarding would allow time to plan to reduce other spend.
- Members acknowledged the continuing lobbying of central government to contribute to the additional costs of pensions and it was confirmed that any money received or pension changes would be brought back to the Full Authority.
- Advice was always taken with regards to borrowing.
- Work around contaminants prioritised stations at higher risk.

RESOLVED

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority approved the following:

- a) The 2023/24 monitoring position as set out in paragraphs 31 – 37, including the £500,000 contribution to the Capital Payments Reserve in 2023/24 and the split of the 2023/24 underspend between the Transformation Reserve and the Capital Payments Reserve.
- b) The one off pressures set out in paragraphs 65 and 66, to be funded from the Transformation Reserve.
- c) The Revenue Budget for 2024/25, as set out in **Appendix A1**.
- d) The Revised Revenue Budget for 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix A2**.
- e) The Medium Term Financial Plan, as set out in **Appendix B**.
- f) The Capital Programme and funding as set out in **Appendix C1** and exempt **Appendix C2**.
- g) The Reserves Strategy as set out in **Appendix D**. This includes the contribution of £1.5m from an underspend on Capital Financing costs to the Transformation reserve as set out in paragraph 96 of the main report.

- h) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 (and the remainder of 2023/24) as set out in **Appendix E**.
- i) Delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer to manage the Fire and Rescue Authority's investments and borrowing according to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as appropriate.
- j) The Capital and Investment Strategy as set out in **Appendix F** for 2024/25, (and the remainder of 2023/24).
- k) The Section 25 Report as set out in **Appendix G** which should be taken into account by the Authority in agreeing the budget and council tax.
- l) The council tax requirement for the Authority for the year beginning 1 April 2024 of £59,533,418.31.
- m) That the Authority's council tax be increased by 2.99% for a Band D property for the year beginning 1 April 2024 and for the properties in each band to be increased by 2.99%, as set out in paragraph 44 of the report:

Band A:	£55.23	Band E:	£101.25
Band B:	£64.43	Band F:	£119.66
Band C:	£73.64	Band G:	£138.07
Band D:	£82.84	Band H:	£165.68
- n) That the precepts set out in paragraph 50 of this report, totalling £59,533,418.31 are issued on the billing authorities in Hampshire, requiring the payment in such instalments and on such dates set by them and previously notified to the Authority, in proportion to the tax base of each billing authority's area as determined by them.
- o) The principle of adding any early delivery of savings from the efficiencies developed to meet the anticipated budget gap in 2025/26 to the Budget Equalisation Reserve was agreed.

236. **ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer, which sought approval for the Annual Pay Policy Statement for the Fire Service (item 8 in the minute book).

The report was summarised, and it was confirmed that even though the methodology at Appendix B had been updated, the information required as part of the process remained the same.

Decisions made historically by the Principal Officers Pay Review Working Group were always made public, but rationale for the decision remained exempt.

It was agreed that continuing professional development awards would be looked at in more detail at a future APAG meeting.

RESOLVED

a) The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority approved the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix A for publication on Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service's website.

b) The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority approved the updated methodology for the annual local review of Principal Officer pay at Appendix B.

237. HIWFRA SAFETY PLAN: YEAR 5 IMPROVEMENTS

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer on the Safety Plan (item 9 in the minute book), which provided an update on activity to date and focussed on the final year of the current plan.

The report was summarised and during questions, the following points were clarified:

- A lot of work had been done on community engagement, targeting specific areas and the communications team had been restructured to allow set roles to focus on consultations and community engagement.
- Advice and guidance was provided from international learnings on a more general basis rather than directly.
- A lot of improvement work had already been done around building regulations, but this would be looked at again following the publication of new building safety regulations to ensure everything had been covered.
- Official actions were being awaited following Phase 2 of the Grenfell Tower learnings, but the Service had been proactive and already embedded new practice.

RESOLVED

The HIWFRS Safety Plan Year 5 improvements be approved by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

238. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following items of business, as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the reports.

239. **BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENT 2024/25 INCLUDING MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

The Authority considered the appendix alongside the main budget item at agenda item 7.

240. **RETROSPECTIVE BUILDING DESIGN PRINCIPLES REPROFILE OF CAPITAL - HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 12 in the minute book) on retrospective building design principles and healthy and inclusive workplaces [SEE EXEMPT MINUTE].

Chairman,