

# ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



### ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2008 AT 14:00 HOURS

#### Present:

Councillor B Archibald	Councillor L Lee
Councillor Mrs S Barker	Councillor S MacPherson
Councillor K Bobbin	Councillor D W Morris
Councillor C R Dandridge	Councillor R Pearson
Councillor G J Davies	Councillor J Reeves
Councillor R F T Davy	Councillor C Riley
Councillor L J Double	Councillor J Roberts
Councillor C W Finn	Councillor T C Smith-Hughes
Councillor I Gale	Councillor J Spencer
Councillor A M Hedley	Councillor S M Walsh
Councillor Mrs A E Holland	Councillor R Walters
Councillor M Howard	Councillor E Webster

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor MacPherson.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in respect of items included on the agenda.

#### 3. MINUTES

The Authority received the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2007.

#### Resolved:

That the minutes be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 4. STANDARDS COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2008

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 22 January 2008 were received.

#### **Matters Arising**

#### ***Agenda Item 6***

#### ***Membership of the Standards Committee***

The Clerk advised Members that guidance regarding the regulatory changes of 1 April 2008 was awaited from the Government Joint Committee. The Clerk anticipated that a report would be brought to the Authority on 16 April 2008.

## **5. CHALLENGE & INNOVATION COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2007**

The minutes of the meeting of the Challenge & Innovation Committee held on 12 December 2007 were received.

## **6. AUDIT COMMISSION**

The Chairman advised that Ian Davidson, Business Partner from the Audit Commission was at the meeting, Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/029/08 "Fire and Rescue Performance Assessment" would form an agenda item no. 10a.

## **7. TREASURER'S REPORT ON BUDGET**

The Authority received the Finance Director & Treasurer's report EFA/027/08 which provided a review of the 2008/09 budget. Members observed that the liability for firefighter pensions remained with the Authority but that funds had been transferred to a separate account funded by government grants; a preferred system that facilitated the task of budgeting.

### **Resolved:**

That Members noted the report by the Treasurer and that Members had regard to the report in approving a budget for 2008/09:

## **8. BUDGET 2008-09**

The Authority considered the Chief Fire Officer and Finance Director & Treasurer's report EFA/016/08 which:

1. Provided an update on the revenue and capital budget position for the Authority in the current financial year;
2. Reported on the latest information on the formula grant settlement for 2008/09;
3. Made recommendations on the revenue and capital budget for 2008/09; and
4. Made recommendations on the Council Tax and precept requirements for 2008/09 in the light of the latest data on the tax base.

The final figures for the Council Tax base and the collection account were different from those included in the budget considered by the Policy & Strategy Committee on 23 January 2008; Members were advised that the Authority's funding was a net £127k higher. The higher funding would allow the Authority to reduce the proposed increase in Council Tax and also provided £70k towards reducing the planned level of firefighter vacancies agreed by the Policy & Strategy Committee; the Chief Fire Officer advised that a report regarding the ridership factor would be brought to the next meeting.

Members discussed the budgetary pressure of accommodating headquarters personnel in two different locations; a phased plan for relocation had been outlined and ways in which income could be generated by the Hutton site were being explored. The Authority was confident that the move to Kelvedon Park headquarters would be accomplished as expediently as possible.

It was agreed that the budget provided significant resources and the Service was achieving efficiency savings.

**Resolved:**

That the revenue and capital budgets for 2008/09 be approved:

	2007/08	2008/09
Net Expenditure	<b>£67,893k</b>	<b>£70,666k</b>
<b>Increase from 2007/08</b>		<b>£2,774</b>
<b>Precept</b>	<b>£37,689k</b>	<b>£39,560k</b>
<b>Band D Council Tax</b>	£59.94	£62.28
<b>Increase from 2007/08</b>		3.90%

1. A net expenditure budget of £70.666m;
2. A precept of £39.560m;
3. A Band D council tax of £62.28 (an increase of £2.34, 3.90%)
4. The bands of Council Tax are shown in the following table.

Band	Valuation Band <sup>1</sup>	2007/08 £	2008/09 £
<b>A</b>	<b>Up to £40,000</b>	<b>£39.96</b>	£41.52
<b>B</b>	<b>£40,001 to £52,000</b>	<b>£46.62</b>	£48.44
<b>C</b>	<b>£52,001 to £68,000</b>	<b>£53.28</b>	£55.36
<b>D</b>	<b>£68,001 to £88,000</b>	<b>£59.94</b>	<b>£62.28</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>£88,001 to £120,000</b>	<b>£73.26</b>	£76.12
<b>F</b>	<b>£120,001 to £160,000</b>	<b>£86.58</b>	£89.96
<b>G</b>	<b>£160,001 to £320,000</b>	<b>£99.90</b>	£103.80
<b>H</b>	<b>More than £320,000</b>	<b>£119.88</b>	£124.56

5. Capital expenditure budget of £10,870k in 2008/09.

## **9. CAPITAL FINANCE & TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

Report EFA/017/08 by the Finance Director & Treasurer provided an update on 2007/08 and proposed prudential indicators and treasury management strategy for 2008/09.

Members were advised that variations to annex C of the report would be put to the forthcoming Policy & Strategy Committee.

The Finance Director & Treasurer agreed to research and provide a detailed analysis of the graphical information regarding the report of summer 2007's Borrowing Against Limits after the meeting.

<sup>1</sup> Valuation bands are based on the Valuation as at 1 April 1991

**Resolved:**

That Members:

1. Noted the treasury management position for 2007/08;
2. Noted the performance against the prudential indicators for 2007/08;
3. Approved the treasury management strategy for 2008/09; and
4. Approved the 2008/09 prudential indicators outlined in Annex A of report EFA/017/08.

**10. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2008-11:  
CONSULTATION REPORT**

The Authority considered Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/018/08 which contained summary details of the responses received through the formal IRMP consultation process, and details of the Authority's proposed response to the consultation submissions.

Members noted that despite the consultation document being widely promoted only 48 responses had been received; it was considered that this could indicate tacit endorsement of the proposals.

**Resolved:**

That Members:

1. Noted the content of the *Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2008-2011 Consultation Report* (Appendix 1 to report EFA/018/08);
2. Approved the Authority's commentary in respect of the stakeholder consultation submissions; and,
3. Formally adopted the IRMP proposals and their inclusion in the Corporate Plan 2008-2011.

**11. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/019/08 brought forward a proposal from the Standards Committee for amendments to the Members' Allowance Scheme. The Standards Committee had considered an increase in the basic allowance based on an increase in workload, together with research into the time commitment of Members, Lead Members, Group Leaders, the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The following amendments were proposed:

- That an adjustment of a 10% increase was made to the basic allowance of all EFA Members for 2007/08;
- That a further adjustment of a 10% increase to the basic Member's allowance was also made for the year 2008/09; and
- That the adjustment for 2007/08 be backdated to July 2007, with the 2008/09 increase effective from 1 July 2008 so that new allowances were implemented after the Authority's annual meeting;

The alterations to basic allowances would be proportionately reflected in all the special allowances directly proportional to the basic allowance.

The basic allowance and special responsibility allowances related to them would be subject to uplift in line with the increase in local authority pay from 1 April 2009.

	01/07/2006	01/04/2007	01/07/2007	01/07/2008	Notes
Basic Allowance – All Members	£3,636	£3,726	£4,099	£4,509	
Chairman of the Fire Authority	£12,726	£13,041	£14,347	£15,782	3 ½ basic
Vice Chairman	£6,363	£6,520	£7,173	£7,891	1 ¾ basic
Labour Group Leader	£6,363	£6,520	£7,173	£7,891	1 ¾ basic
Liberal Democrat Group Leader	£2,424	£2,484	£2,733	£3,006	2/3 basic
Lead Members	£606	£621	£683	£752	1/6 basic
Chair of the Standards Committee	£606	£621	£683	£752	1/6 basic
Chairman EFA (Trading) Limited	£2,000	£2,050	£2,050	£2,050	Subject to uplift from 1/4/2008
Director EFA (Trading) Limited	£1,000	£1,025	£1,025	£1,025	

The increase would add £12k to the Authority's costs in 2007/08 and a further £14k in 2008/09, increasing the total cost of Members allowances to £148k in 2008/09.

**Resolved:**

That Members:

Approved the revised scheme of Members' Allowances (Appendix 1 to report EFA/019/08) to come into effect from 1 July 2007.

**12. FIRE AND RESCUE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2007**

Report EFA/029/08 by the Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the outcome of the Authority's Performance Assessment for 2007. Ian Davidson, ECFRS relationship manager, congratulated the Authority for having been assessed as "*improving well*" in 2007

Members were pleased that the Service's progress had been recognised.

**Resolved:**

That Members noted the contents of the report.

**13. CORPORATE MANSLAUGHTER AND CORPORATE HOMICIDE ACT 2007**

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/021/08 advised Members regarding the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 which was to come into force on 6 April 2008.

**Resolved:**

That Members noted the contents of the report.

**14. MEMBERS' FORWARD PLANNING WORKSHOP – NOVEMBER 2007**

Chief Fire Officer's report (EFA/022/08) provided Members with a précis of the discussions held at the Forward Planning Workshop in November 2007. Officers were to use the outcomes and context of the discussions to frame the work currently on-going in respect of: Equality and Diversity; the Environment; and Efficiency

Savings and Community Risk Management linked to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

**Resolved:**

That Members:

Noted the contents of the report; and,  
Approved the date of the next Forward Planning Workshop as 23 and 24 October 2008.

**15. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Authority received report EFA/023/08. The Challenge & Innovation Committee held in December 2007 had agreed that selected performance information was reported to the full Authority. The selected performance information included the following areas:

Performing above target

- BVPI 206iii – Deliberate secondary fires excluding vehicles
- BVPI 206iv – Deliberate secondary fire in vehicles
- RTC Number of People Killed and Seriously Injured

Performing below target

- Speed of Response – % Incidents attended in 8, 10 and 20 minutes
- BVPI 12i – Proportion of working days lost due to sickness absence by whole time uniformed staff
- BVPI 12ii - Proportion of working days lost due to sickness absence by all full time

The Authority referred to the Speed of Response indicators; Members were of the opinion that since the current indicators did not exclude the time taken for retained firefighters to attend the station a better indicator would measure the Service's speed of response to a call.

Members were aware that a large amount of house building was planned for Essex. It was agreed that it would be helpful to look at a longer term graphical representation of proposed development and response.

**Resolved:**

That Members noted the contents of the report.

**16. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (RMB) – MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2008**

The Authority received Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/028/08, its purpose to update Members with the minutes of the Regional Management Board (RMB) meeting of 16 January 2008. Members received the East of England Fire & Rescue Authorities' Regional Management Board Corporate Plan 2007-2010. The Authority was advised that Peter Betts, Director of Fire and Resilience at Communities and Local Government, would attend the next meeting of the RMB on 26 March 2008 and be available to answer questions beforehand.

**Resolved:**

That Members noted the contents of the report.

**17. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE SUBMISSION OF REGISTER**

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/025/08 reported on formal discipline cases held in the calendar year 2007.

**Resolved:**

That Members noted the contents of the report.

**18. REPORT TO CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES**

**Resolved:**

That the following items comprise the Authority's report to the Constituent Authorities:

1. Budget 2008/09
2. Capital Finance & Treasury Management
3. Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
4. Performance Management
5. Direction of Travel Assessment 2007/08

The meeting ended at 11:10 hours

Signed .....  
Chairman, Councillor Simon Walsh 16 April 2008

