

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 APRIL 2008 AT 10:00 HOURS

Present:

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

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Morris and Walters.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

21. MINUTES

The minutes of 13 February 2008 were amended for accuracy and signed by the Chairman.

Amendment:

Councillor Mrs J Young had attended the meeting.

22. CHALLENGE & INNOVATION – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2008

The minutes of the Challenge & Innovation Committee meeting held on 26 March 2008 were received.

23. POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Strategy Committee held on 26 March 2008 were received.

24. RIDERSHIP FACTOR AND RISK PROFILE FOR ECFRS

The Authority received a presentation that outlined the medium to long term risk profile of Essex and explained the ridership factor.

Members referred to the impact of plans to build a natural gas importation, storage and regasification facility at Canvey; and were advised that risk profiling was in hand; and in response to the Authority's reference to increased industrial and commercial growth in Essex; the Service confirmed robust contingency planning and civil resilience. It was acknowledged that the growth in development required additional resources, funding was provided by additional business council tax and the county's risk profile determined the government funding assessment.

Members were advised that the Service continued to lobby central government for funding the additional demand of the Olympic Games 2012.

25. POLICY ON MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION FOR FUNDING CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Report EFA/042/08 by the Finance Director & Treasurer set proposals for the calculation of the minimum revenue provision in the Authority's accounts for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Resolved:

That Members:

1. Agreed to use the Capital Financing Requirement Method (4%) to calculate the minimum revenue provision for 2007-08
2. Agreed to use the Capital Financing Requirement method (4%) to calculate the minimum revenue provision for 2008-09; and
3. Noted that proposals for future years would be brought forward as part of the budget process.

26. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

At the request of the Challenge & Innovation Committee the Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/043/08 presented the Authority's performance against key performance measures, for the period April 2007 to January 2008; and provided some comparison of the Authority's current performance against 2006/07 and average family group Fire Service performance.

Resolved:

That Members noted the contents of the report..

27. PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND CORPORATE TARGET SETTING

Members received Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/044/08. The report presented recommendations for a revised performance-reporting regime in response to impending changes to the national performance indicators. The Authority was asked to approve indicators and associated targets to be adopted and reported on, from

April 2008 and was advised of changes in response to the impending deregulated Best Value regime.

The Authority referred to BVPI 15i and BVPI 15ii, Essex had a high percentage of Service personnel retired as a result of ill health when compared to the majority of other authorities. The Service advised that demographics together with large recruitment/retirements would have impacted on previous years. Effective systems were now beginning to bring about a decrease in the levels of ill health retirement.

Resolved:

That Members:

1. Noted the change in the performance reporting requirements of the Authority;
2. Agreed the proposed changes to the performance indicators that are reported to the Authority;
3. Agreed the provisional targets for 2008/11 based on projected year-end performance at the end of the third quarter for 2007/08;
4. Noted that the provisional targets may be adjusted once full year 2007/08 performance figures were available; and,
5. Noted the change to the Best Value regime, effective from April 2008.

28. CORPORATE PLAN 2008-11

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/045/08 sought Members' approval for the Essex Fire Authority's draft Corporate Plan 2008-11.

Resolved:

That Members approved the content of the draft Corporate Plan 2008-11.

29. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/046/08 provided a brief summary of the recent work conducted in a number of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) related areas of interest to the PPE Task & Finish Group (TFG).

The Chairman of the Challenge & Innovation Committee thanked the TFG; he said there had been two main outcomes; that following their review the TFG had been able to endorse the contract with Bristol Uniforms and that Members had gained a wider understanding of works within the Service. TFG Members had been well received wherever they went; it had been a good learning experience. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer thanked the TFG Members for their scrutiny and oversight. The Chairman was of the view that the report was a good demonstration of the deeper involvement undertaken by democratically elected Members.

Resolved:

That Members noted the work of the Personal Protective Equipment Task & Finish Groups.

30. ARRANGEMENTS FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Members considered the Monitoring Officer and Clerk's report EFA/047/08 reference the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which introduced the principle of local determination for complaints of misconduct made against elected Members. The report advised that the new legislation regulated the composition of the new Standards Committees and provided that 25% of each committee should be composed of independent members and that the Chair of the committee must also be independent (not an elected Member). The report also explained that any new Standards Committee would need to comprise of approximately nine members. The date for implementation of the new Standards Regime was 1 May 2008.

Members discussed the Clerk's recommendation that the Authority enter into arrangements for a joint Standards Committee with Essex County Council and the following further options:

- To change and enlarge the current Standards Committee
- To enter into arrangements for a joint Standards Committee with another Authority
- To enter into arrangements for a joint Standards Committee with another Fire or Police Authority's Standards Committee
- To explore the potential for a Regional Management Board Standards Committee

Some of the Members were of the opinion that they would wish to explore all of the options more fully and it was agreed therefore that pending further work the Authority would, as an interim measure, enter into arrangements with Essex County Council for a joint Standards Committee.

The Chairman of the Standards Committee said that he fully supported the recommendations of the report.

Resolved: by (15 votes to 8)

That Members:

1. Agreed as an interim measure that the Fire Authority should enter into arrangements with Essex County Council for the formation of a joint Standards Committee for both Authorities
2. Authorised the Clerk of the Fire Authority, in consultation with the Chairman to enter into negotiations with Essex County Council as to the basis on which the joint committee would operate in accordance with the Government regulations (upon the establishment and operation of joint standards committees) that are currently awaited.

31. REPORT TO CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

Resolved:

That the following item comprises the report to the Constituent Authorities:

1. Operational Incidents Report April – December 2007

32. OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS REPORT APRIL – DECEMBER 2007

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/051/08 provided an update on operational incidents 1 April to 31 December 2007.

Members agreed that it was helpful information.

Resolved:

That Members noted the contents of the report.

33. ANY OTHER PART 1 BUSINESS

1. ECFRS Managers' Brief

Members received a copy of the above internal publication.

2. Chairman's Announcement

The Chairman advised that Councillor Dandridge was standing down from the Committee. Councillor Dandridge was thanked for ten years of service.

34. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved:

That the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of minute no 35 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

PRINCIPAL FIRE OFFICERS' PAY (Paragraph 1)

35. PRINCIPAL FIRE OFFICERS' PAY

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/050/08 informed the Authority of the outcomes of a review of the pay to uniformed Principal Fire Officers in ECFRS, as considered by the Grievance, Discipline and Remuneration group for Principal Officers.

Resolved:

That Members:

1. Agreed that the Chief Fire Officer's pay is adjusted to reflect the following local pay award increases:

4%	(from 1 Jan 2006)
3.5%	(from 1 Jan 2007)
2.5%	(from 1 Jan 2008)

2. Agreed that the proportional percentage salary of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, as compared to the Chief Fire Officer, be increased by 2.5% to 82.5% of the Chief Fire Officer's pay from 1 Jan 2008.

3. Agreed that future local reviews are based on data gathered from the benchmarking group of Hampshire and Kent to ensure that Essex pay rates remain comparable with those of other authorities.

The meeting ended at 12:00 hours

Signed
Chairman, Councillor Simon Walsh 11 June 2008

