

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2009 AT 10:00 HOURS

Present:

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| Councillor B Aspinell | Councillor M Miller |
| Councillor S Barker | Councillor D W Morris |
| Councillor K Bentley | Councillor R Pearson |
| Councillor R Callender | Councillor J Reeves |
| Councillor P Channer | Councillor C Riley |
| Councillor I Harrison | Councillor J Roberts |
| Councillor A M Hedley (Chairman) | Councillor M Skeels |
| Councillor A E Holland (Vice-Chairman) | Councillor T C Smith-Hughes |
| Councillor E Johnson | Councillor R Walters |
| Councillor J Knapman | Councillor E Webster |
| Councillor G McEwen | Councillor P Wexham |
| | Councillor D White |

The following Officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Chief Fire Officer David Johnson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark Jones
Finance Director & Treasurer Mike Clayton
Director of HR & Workforce Planning, Richard Hopper
Assistant Chief Fire Officer Gordon Hunter
Assistant Chief Fire Officer Stewart Thomson
Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Philip Thompson

34. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Chairman welcomed new Members to the Fire Authority from Essex County Council: Councillor B Aspinell, Councillor K Bentley, Councillor R Callender, Councillor P Channer, Councillor J Knapman, Councillor G McEwen, Councillor M Miller, Councillor M Skeels and Councillor A Turrell.

35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors MacPherson and Turrell.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Fire Officer advised that no principal ECFRS officers would be present during discussion or voting of item 54, Principal Officers Provided Car Scheme.

37. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Barker nominated Councillor Hedley as Chairman; the nomination was seconded by Councillor Walters.

Councillor Hedley was elected as Chairman for 2009/10.

The Chairman said that being Chairman of the Authority was the best job he had ever had and thanked Members for their expression of confidence.

38. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman nominated Councillor Holland as Vice-Chairman. In his nomination the Chairman referred to Councillor Holland's invaluable experience regarding Regional Control and the Local Authority Controlled Company, he thanked her for bringing him up to speed during his first year as Chairman. He congratulated Councillor Holland on her future inauguration as the Mayor of Southend Borough Council 2010.

Councillor Holland's nomination as Vice-Chairman was seconded by Councillor Walters.

Councillor Holland was elected as Vice Chairman for 2009/10

39. MINUTES

The Authority received the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2009.

Resolved:

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

40. VOTE OF THANKS

The Chairman advised that he had written personally to those Members who had not returned to the Authority following the local government elections.

41. MEMBERSHIP OF SUB COMMITTEES AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The subject of Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/055/09 was the membership of the Authority, Members' Induction Training dates and the annual Member 'Development' Analysis.

Resolved:

That:

1. Membership of the sub committees and named Authority representatives be confirmed as follows:

Policy & Strategy Committee

Councillor K Bentley
Councillor R Callender
Councillor I Harrison
Councillor A M Hedley (Chairman)
Councillor A E Holland (Vice Chairman)

Councillor D W Morris
Councillor R A Pearson
Councillor T C Smith-Hughes
Councillor A Turrell
Councillor E Webster

Challenge & Innovation Committee

Councillor B Aspinell
Councillor S Barker (Chairman)
Councillor P Channer
Councillor E Johnson
Councillor J Knapman
Councillor G McEwen
Councillor S MacPherson
Councillor M Miller

Councillor J Reeves (Vice Chairman)
Councillor C Riley
Councillor J Roberts
Councillor M Skeels
Councillor R Walters
Councillor P Wexham
Councillor D White

Audit & Review Committee

Councillor S Barker (Chairman)
Councillor J Knapman
Councillor S MacPherson
Councillor C Riley
Councillor P Wexham

Joint Standards Committee with Essex County Council

Essex County Council - Councillor R Pearson
Southend Borough Council - Councillor D White
Thurrock Council - Councillor S MacPherson

East of England Regional Control Centre Ltd

Directors
EFA Chairman
EFA Vice Chairman

Alternate Directors
Councillor S Barker
Councillor R Pearson

Regional Management Board

EFA Chairman
EFA Vice Chairman

Grievance, Discipline and Remuneration Group for Principal Officers

Councillor B Aspinell
Councillor S Barker
Councillor P Channer
Councillor A M Hedley
Councillor A E Holland
Councillor D W Morris

Councillor R Pearson
Councillor J M Reeves
Councillor J Roberts
Councillor T C Smith-Hughes

EFA (Trading) Ltd

EFA Directors (Type A):

Councillor S Barker (Chairman)
Councillor J Reeves (Vice Chairman)
Councillor J Roberts
Councillor E Webster
Councillor P Wexham
Councillor D White
Vacant position

Officers (Type B)

DCFO M Jones
ACFO S Thomson

Alternates

ACFO G Hunter
Vacant position

Accredited Training Charity

Non EFA Trustees:

J Foile
Councillor G Isaacs
Mr R Colley
Ms J Keddy
Ms M Cunningham

EFA Trustees:

Councillor G MacEwen
Councillor D Morris
Councillor R Pearson
Councillor C Riley

The Essex Fire Authority's nominee to the Essex Pension Fund board

Councillor E Johnson

Lead Members

| | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Safer Communities and Equal Opportunities | Councillor C Riley (or nominee) |
| Environmental Champion | Councillor G McEwen (or nominee) |
| Health & Safety | Councillor R Pearson |
| IT & Data Management | Councillor E Johnson |
| Risk Management Champion | EFA Vice Chairman |
| Comprehensive Performance Reviews & Risk Management Champion | Councillor J Roberts |

Community Command Liaison Members

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Basildon & Castlepoint | Councillor D Morris Councillor J M Reeves |
| Chelmsford & Maldon | Councillor P Channer Councillor T C Smith-Hughes |
| Colchester & Tendring | Councillor M Skeels Councillor A Turrell |
| Harlow & Epping | Councillor E Johnson Councillor E Webster |
| Southend & Rochford | Councillor A E Holland Councillor R Pearson |
| Thurrock & Brentwood | Councillor I Harrison Councillor J Roberts |
| Uttlesford & Braintree | Councillor S M Walsh Councillor R Walters |

2. The following dates be agreed

Fire Authority (at 10:00 hours unless otherwise annotated)

Wednesday 09 Sep 2009
Wednesday 09 Dec 2009
Wednesday 10 Feb 2010
Wednesday 21 Apr 2010
Wednesday 09 Jun 2010
Wednesday 08 Sep 2010 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 08 Dec 2010 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 09 Feb 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 20 Apr 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 08 Jun 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Policy & Strategy Committee (at 10:00 hours unless otherwise annotated)

Wednesday 22 Jul 2009
Wednesday 23 Sep 2009
Wednesday 11 Nov 2009
Wednesday 13 Jan 2010
Wednesday 17 Mar 2010
Wednesday 19 May 2010
Wednesday 23 Jun 2010
Wednesday 15 Sep 2010
Wednesday 10 Nov 2010 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 12 Jan 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 23 Mar 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 11 May 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)
Wednesday 22 Jun 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Challenge & Innovation (at 14:00 hours unless otherwise annotated)

Wednesday 23 Sep 2009

Wednesday 11 Nov 2009

Wednesday 13 Jan 2010

Wednesday 17 Mar 2010

Wednesday 19 May 2010

Wednesday 23 Jun 2010

Wednesday 15 Sep 2010 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Wednesday 10 Nov 2010 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Wednesday 12 Jan 2011(Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Wednesday 23 Mar 2011(Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Wednesday 11 May 2011 (Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

Wednesday 22 Jun 2011(Provisional to be confirmed at June 2010 AGM)

3. The following dates for Members' Induction Training be agreed

Induction Days

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 1. Friday 17 July 2009 | Strategic Overview | Half day |
| 2. Thursday 23 July 2009 | Strategic Summary | Half day |
| 3. TBA | Tactical Overview | Visit local command HQ, fire station and development establishment |

4. Members noted that a development analysis would be sent out to all Members

5. That the Constitution Book would be revised to reflect changes

42. SERVICE STRATEGY

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/056/09 presented the revised Service Strategy and performance framework reflecting the outcomes of the consultation process.

Resolved:

That Members approved:

1. The content and format of the revised strategy for the period 2009-10.
2. The content and reporting framework supporting the strategy.
3. The targets set within the framework.
4. Principle of continual annual review for each subsequent business year.

43. ANNUAL REPORT

Report EFA/057/09 by the Chief Fire Officer presented the Annual Report 2009.

Councillor Barker suggested that the majority of the document concentrated on fire incidents and had not encapsulated the Service's attendance at 1,700 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). Councillor Barker proposed that a future document gave greater emphasis to RTC attendance. DCFO Jones assured Members that the Service did not take lightly the importance of its work at RTCs and that RTC reduction was a considerable success.

In response to Councillor Roberts' enquiry DCFO Jones advised that the scores awarded by the Audit Commission were on a scale of 1-4, it was agreed that the scale and an

explanation of the scores would be included in the published report. Councillor Roberts noted the larger number of small fires recorded by the Basildon & Castle Point and Thurrock & Brentwood Commands, DCFO Jones advised that he would facilitate further information for the Councillor.

Councillor Roberts referred to budgetary pressures and enquired if it was necessary to supply the Annual Report in five other specified languages. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the languages had been identified as the most prevalent alternatives; however the Service was permitted to consider the financial implications of any request/s to publish in other languages.

Councillor Smith-Hughes requested that the Authority receive information on how the Annual Report would be distributed and target the community it served. The DCFO agreed to update Members regarding the statistical information and method of distribution. ACFO Hunter added that the Service had an established network to ensure that publications such as Escape magazine were distributed to hard to reach groups. Councillor Bentley suggested that pod casting was inexpensive and the new direction to engage with young people. The Chairman agreed that this suggestion should be taken back to the Media team.

Resolved:

That Members approved the Annual Report 2009.

44. TARGET SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

Report EFA/058/09 by the Chief Fire Officer reported on the Service's performance April 08 to March 09 and placed before Members proposed target setting arrangements to 2011.

Councillor Barker referred to the figures relating to fire deaths; that percentages did not properly demonstrate real figures for outturn. The DCFO said that any fire death was regrettable, however he was of the view that data process belied that statistically Essex was one of the safest places to live, that a better measure would capture the Service's effectiveness in reducing primary fires.

Councillor Smith-Hughes noted that the Challenge & Innovation Committee scheduled for September would review the targets, examine the historical context, where the Service had come from, where it was going or if a target had been too ambitious. He was of the view that the sample format for data was the right way to present performance.

Resolved:

That Members agreed:

1. Provisional targets for the period 2009–2011 as shown in Appendix 1 of report EFA/058/09
2. The revised presentational format of performance reporting to aid clarity for the Challenge and Innovation Committee as shown in Appendix 2 of report EFA/058/09.

45. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2008/09

The Finance Director & Treasurer's report EFA/059/09 reported on the final outturn position for 2008/09.

Councillor Wexham enquired about Government rulings on efficiency savings. The Finance Director & Treasurer advised that the Government required savings of 3% of budgets in years 2008-11; the Authority was on track in the first year and it was anticipated that it would be ahead in the second year of profile. The Chancellor had announced another 1% of savings that could impact in 2010-11.

Resolved:

That Members noted the report on Outturn expenditure.

46. ACCOUNTS 2008/09

The Finance Director & Treasurer's report submitted to Members the Statement of Accounts for the year end to 31 March 2009.

Councillor Knapman referred to the disclosure of officers' emoluments. He asked the Chief Fire Officer what the Authority achieved now that more officers were earning in excess of £50k. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Authority had been scored by the Audit Commission in its Operational Assessment of Service Delivery as a score of 4 – performing strongly, for Value for Money the Service had received a score of 3 and in the Audit Commission's overall judgement had scored 3 – Improving well. The Chief Fire Officer advised that for the previous three years the Authority had levied amongst the lowest Council Tax increases nationally.

Councillor Knapman queried the number of officers earning more than £50k. The Chief Fire Officer advised that there were fewer principal officers than previously, and that the Fire Authority had subsequently employed consultants to review their payscales, the Vice-Chairman added that the decided scales had not been 'top-end' and had had to be back-dated following a three year period of nil increase. Councillor Johnson suggested that more officers were earning £50k or more because of inflation and that increased numbers of officers were now within the scope of reporting. Councillor Smith-Hughes agreed that £50k had been set as a yardstick for reporting some ten years previously. Councillor McEwen suggested making the effect of inflation and nationally negotiated payscales more conspicuous within the accounts.

The Chief Fire Officer referred Members to the investment in front-line firefighting and the replacement of five Aerial Ladder Platform appliances in 2008/09.

In response to Councillor Barker's enquiry about the depreciation of assets, the Finance Director & Treasurer advised that most of the fixed assets were under construction and that depreciation had also related to appliances, new appliances had been due for delivery but then delayed by the suppliers to the start of the current financial year.

Resolved:

That Members agreed:

1. The Governance statement (pages 4 to 7 of the Accounts) be approved and that the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer be authorised to sign the statement; and

2. The 2008/09 Statement of Accounts be approved and the Treasurer be authorised to sign the Accounts.

47. REPORT TO CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

Resolved:

That the following items comprise the report to the Constituent Authorities:

- An executive summary of the Annual report and reference to the full version on the Authority's website
- Operational Incidents Report
- Equality & Diversity Award

48. PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members received Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/062/09 which reported on the Service's performance for the key National Indicators suite introduced in 2008 coupled with year-end performance against the legacy Best Value and local performance indicators for April 08 to March 09. The DCFO apologised for typographical errors on the y axis of some of the graphical information presented.

Resolved:

That Members considered and noted the performance information in appendix 1 attached to report EFA/062/09.

49. OPERATIONAL INCIDENTS

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/063/09 provided Members with information on the number and type of operational incidents that the Service attended April 08 to March 09. The report also notified Members of the nationally recognised work of an ECFRS officer who had made a significant contribution to the safety of gypsy and traveller communities, Station Officer Martin Trevillion had received the National Fire & Rescue Service Equality & Diversity Award 2009.

Councillor Riley, Lead Member for Safety Communities drew Members' attention to the types of incident table within the report; he said that embedded in the figures and statistics were the results of a lot of community safety work around the county. Councillor Riley urged new Members to the Authority to promote the FireBreak schemes and to lobby local CDRPs to maintain funding. Councillor Riley recalled recently speaking to a young person at a FireBreak pass out, the young person had said that he had been on the verge of offending prior to participating on the scheme and that FireBreak had been the best thing he had ever done.

Councillor Barker said that it was good to read the incidents of notable interest but queried whether the costs to the Authority should be detailed as additional costs. Councillor Smith-Hughes did not agree, he was of the view that if anything both additional costs and running costs would be required to give a clearer indication. Councillor Walters' opinion was that the costs did not represent the capital costs of equipment. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the cost of incidents had been quantified in response to Members' request (barring financial

information relating to attendance at a fatal incident). The Chairman suggested that the Challenge & Innovation Committee review requirements of incident cost information.

Resolved:

That Members noted the contents of the report.

50. FIRECONTROL PROJECT CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman and Vice Chairman declared a personal interest in the following item in respect of their appointment by the Fire Authority as Directors of the Regional Control Centre Company.

Report EFA/064/09 provided Members with an updated overview of recent FiReControl project correspondence between the CLG and the Chief Fire Officer.

ACFO Thomson advised Members that the CLG would be meeting with Officers at Kelvedon Park the following week to discuss 'New Burdens' funding. The Chairman advised that he would update Members with progress of that meeting.

Councillor Riley asked about a lack of resources at FiReControl. The Chief Fire Officer said that he had a statutory duty to receive calls and maintain appliances; he could delegate that responsibility in no lesser standard than existing to a company but required Fire Authority approval to do so. The Chief Fire Officer was asked about the effect of declining to delegate responsibility to the company, he said that there had been some talk of application of powers to enforce an Authority to do so but that it was uncharted waters. The Chief Fire Officer was concerned that the project was costing more money, that there was the additional burden of perpetuity, he said that the project had purported to be an improvement and more resilient.

Councillor Riley asked about the views of the Authority's neighbours. The Chief Fire Officer advised that some appeared unconcerned but at least two other Authorities were as unhappy about the project as Essex. ACFO Thomson advised that Essex's centre would be the last to roll out and therefore the Authority would be able to see how the system functioned, he further said that nationally three or four Authorities had stood strongly against regionalisation with the South West as challenging as Essex, however some regions were geographically suited to regionalisation.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the network of buildings was larger than needed, the FiReLink radio project had problems and that to date there was no mobilising system. The Chairman was of a personal view that the cut over could be delayed to 2014 which would force an interim decant of Control from the Hutton site to Kelvedon Park. Councillor Wexham asked how the Authority could maintain the morale of Control staff. The Chief Fire Officer said that it was a challenge. All staff had received individual letters three years preceding and there was still an aspiration they would migrate into other jobs within the Service. There would also be a requirement to maintain local staffing after cut over.

Councillor Bentley asked about the level of public consultation regarding the Government's initiative to regionalise Control centres. ACFO Thomson advised that business cases had been publicised for consultation.

Councillor McEwen was impressed with the Chief Fire Officer's correspondence with the CLG, he suggested that there was merit in having the exchange included on the Report to Constituent Authorities, that it may engender more general consultation.

Resolved:

That Members noted the contents of the report.

51. PRESENTATION TO COUNCILLOR WHITE

The Authority made a presentation to Councillor White to mark her forthcoming marriage.

52. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of minute nos 53 and 54 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:

EFA TRADING SHAREHOLDER'S REPORT (Paragraph 3)
PRINCIPAL OFFICERS' PROVIDED CAR SCHEME (Paragraph 2)

53. ANNUAL REPORT OF DIRECTORS OF EFA (T) LTD TO ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Report EFA/065/09 provided the shareholders of EFA (T) with an account of the previous year's business achievements and a look forward to 2009/10.

The Authority acknowledged that the economic recession had resulted in considerable reduction in demand for training services.

Resolved:

That Members noted the contents of the report.

54. PRINCIPAL OFFICERS' CAR SCHEME

Report EFA/066/09 by the Grievance, Discipline and Remuneration of Principal Officers Group presented amendments to the Principal Officers Provided Car Scheme.

Resolved:

That Members endorsed the amendments to the Principal Officers Provided Car Scheme currently in use within Essex Fire Authority which were approved by the Discipline & Remuneration of Principal Officers Group.

Signed
Chairman, 9 September 2009

