

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, The Godlands, Tovil, Maidstone, ME15 6XB on Thursday 19th October 2023.

PRESENT: - Mr P Barrington-King, Mr A Brady, Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Mr M Hood, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr B Kemp (Vice-Chair) Mr S Manion, Mr V Maple, Mr J McInroy, Ms J Meade, Ms C Parfitt-Reid, Mr M Prenter; Mr C Simkins, Mr M Sole, Mr B Sweetland, Ms Z Van-Dyke.

APOLOGIES: - Mr D Beaney, Mr A Booth, Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Ms S Hohler, Mr A Ridgers and Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington OBE QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Mrs A Hartley; Director, Response and Resilience, Mr M Rist; Director, Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, HR, Mrs K Irvine; Assistant Director, Response, Mr M Deadman; Assistant Director, Resilience, Mr C Else; Assistant Director, Customer and Building Safety, Mr M Woodward; Head of Finance, Pensions and Treasury, Mr B Fullbrook; Head of Finance, Pensions and Treasury, Mrs N Walker; Head of Policy, Dr O Thompson; Head of Data Intelligence, Ms N Harryman; and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

IN ATTENDANCE: - The Authority's Independent Person, Mrs J Waterman.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

18. Chairman's Announcements

(Item A1)

- (1) The Chair welcomed Mrs Jenny Waterman to the meeting.
- (2) Members gave thanks to the Kent contingent of the UKISAR for their efforts in Morocco following the earthquake in September.
- (3) The Chair reminded Members of the date and time of this year's KFRS Annual Award Ceremony.
- (4) Members gave their best wishes to the Chief Executive for a speedy recovery following her ankle operation.

19. Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 20 April 2023

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance meeting held on 20 April 2023 be noted.

20. Minutes of the Authority held on 29 June 2023

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 29 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

21. Community Risk Management Plan – Risk Analysis and Assessment

(Item B1 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) risk analysis and assessment document, Creating a Safer Future – Together and council tax options for 2024/25 for public consultation.
- (2) Mr Maple said that it was important that Members of the Authority encouraged their communities to get involved in the consultation process. Director for Prevention, Protection and Customer Safety added that there will be an engagement plan to support

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the public consultation so in the coming weeks, Members will be sent information packs which will contain briefing materials and leaflets for their use.

- (3) RESOLVED that: -
- (a) the CRMP risk analysis and assessment document, *Creating a Safer Future – Together*, as attached at Appendix 1 to the covering report, be approved.
 - (b) the proposal and associated timescales for public consultation on the *Creating a Safer Future – Together* document and council tax options for 2024/25, be approved.

22. Financial Update for 2023/24

(Item B2 – Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) The Authority was provided with the first detailed forecast outturn position on the revenue and capital budgets for 2023/24.
- (2) The report also highlighted the forecast underspend of £1.250m; set out the risks and budget volatility that remain for the last six months of the financial year and a number of other financial updates.
- (3) Members thanked the Director Finance and Corporate Services and her team for very good and easy to read reports.
- (4) Mr Brady asked what the process was for disposing of second-hand fire appliances to which the Director of Response and Resilience explained that decommissioned fire appliances, no longer in service within Kent, have been donated to Fire Aid which is a UK charity, providing fire and rescue equipment and training worldwide.
- (5) Following a question raised by Mr Brady about the impact of the delay to the Live Fire Training facility at Ashford, the Director of Response and Resilience provided Members with an update on some of the obstacles that have occurred which has resulted in the delay of the build. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services also explained some of the financial complexities surrounding this project. The Chief Executive provided assurances to Members that officers are closely monitoring this project to ensure its delivery and viability remains affordable and within the agreed envelope.
- (6) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) any underspend that arises at the end of the 2023/24 financial year be transferred to the Insurance and Resource Reserve, be approved in principle.
 - (b) The contents of the report be noted.

23. Development of Medium-Term Sustainable Financial Plan

(Item B3 - Presentation by Head of Finance, Pensions and Treasury, Barrie Fullbrook)

- (1) The Authority received a presentation from the Head of Finance, Pensions and Treasury on the development of the 2024-2028 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- (2) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the assumptions being adopted to develop the Authority's 2024 - 2028 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, as described in the presentation, be noted.

24. Governance and Policy Updates

(Item B4 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered a report which covered the following governance topics:
 - A. Code of Corporate Governance
 - B. Statement of Assurance 2022/23
 - C. Annual Review of Compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017.
 - D. Policy Update
- (2) Mr Chard made an observation that within the Statement of Assurance it did not include the fact that the Audit and Governance Committee was chaired by an opposition Member which he felt demonstrates good governance around scrutiny.
- (3) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the updated Code of Corporate Governance, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the Statement of Assurance 2022/23, as attached at Appendix 2, to the report, be approved.
 - (c) the contents of the Annual Review of Compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, as attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be noted.
 - (d) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

25. Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23

(Item B5 – Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) The Authority is required by the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual review of treasury management activities and the estimated and actual prudential and treasury indications for the year. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
- (2) The report had already been reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 27 September 2023. However, the Authority considered the final treasury position for 2022/23 to support the draft financial statements which reflects a slight increase of £3k on the interest received on balances to that previously reported.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) this year-end report on treasury management activity for 2022/23, be approved.

26. Mid-Year Treasury and Investment Update 2023/24

(Item B6 – Report by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) The Authority received a mid-year update on treasury management activity for 2023/24 and the extent of compliance with the agreed prudential indicators.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -

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- (a) the mid-year report on treasury management activity for 2023/24, be approved.

27. Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

(Item B7 – Report by Clerk of the Authority)

- (1) The Authority considered the proposed calendar of Member meetings and events for the 2024/25 municipal year.
- (2) The Clerk was requested to revisit the July 2024 Authority date as it clashed with the LGA Annual Conference.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) The 2024 July Authority date be moved to accommodate the LGA Annual Conference.
 - (b) The remaining calendar of Member meetings and other events for 2024/25 be approved.

28. Report to the Authority on the Work of the Audit and Governance Committee

(Item C1 – Report by Chair of Audit and Governance Committee)

- (1) The Authority received its annual report on the activities undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee.
- (2) Mr Chard placed on record his thanks to Mr Maple as Chair of the Committee as well as its Members for the work they have undertaken over the past year.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the contents of the report be noted.

29. Operational Incidents of Interest

(Item C2 – Presentation by Director, Response and Resilience)

- (1) The Authority received a presentation from the Director of Response and Resilience on two noteworthy incidents which covered the firefighting and rescue techniques that were employed, the equipment and resources used and what was learnt as a result of the incidents.
- (2) Mr Maple thanked officers for the presentation and the way it highlighted the use of mutual aid to the new Members on the Authority.
- (3) Members discussed the pros and cons for charging for mutual aid and the moral reasons why this Authority doesn't charge neighbouring fire services and vice versa. The only exception to this being London Fire Brigade where there is a mutual charging agreement in place.
- (4) Mr Maple complimented the Service for the way it handles its social media on how incidents and messages are reported.
- (5) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the contents of the presentation were noted.

30. Information Update

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(Item C3 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members received their regular information updates in an electronic presentation format as part of the weblink sent prior to the meeting. This was an opportunity to provide Members with a more efficient and engaging way of displaying the information contained within the updates and it would also help the Authority to reduce the volume of papers printed for meetings.
- (2) The updates included: -
 - A. Inspection Update
 - B. Performance Update
 - C. Response and Resilience Update
 - D. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update
 - E. Freedom of Information Update
 - F. Annual Update on Members' Standards and Allowances
 - G. Pensions and Pension Board Update
- (3) On B above, Mr Brady submitted some questions to the Clerk ahead of the meeting around performance stats which were answered at the meeting by Director of Response and Resilience.
- (4) On F above, Mr Brady submitted a question to the Clerk ahead of the meeting around allowances paid to the Chair which were answered by the Chief Executive.