

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 13th October 2022.

PRESENT: - Mr P Barrington-King, Mr D Beaney, Mr A Booth, Mr N Chard (Chair), Mr P Cole, Mr N Collor, Mr D Crow-Brown, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M Dendor, Mr P Harman, Ms S Hohler, Mr R Love OBE, Mr S Manion, Mr J McInroy, Ms L Parfitt-Reid, Mr A Ridgers, Mr C Simkins, Mr S Tranter and Mr M Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

APOLOGIES: - Ms K Constantine, Ms S Hudson, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr B Kemp, Mr V Maple and Mr R Thorne.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington QFSM; the Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Ms A Kilpatrick; Director, Response and Resilience, Mr M Rist; Director, Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety, Mr J Quinn; Assistant Director, People and Learning, Mrs K Irvine; Assistant Director, Corporate Services, Mr J Finch; 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 and the Clerk to the Authority, Mrs M Curry.

IN ATTENDANCE: - The Authority's Monitoring Officer, Mr B Gill and the Authority's Independent Person, Mrs J Waterman.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

16. Chairman's Announcements

(Item A1)

- (1) The Chair thanked Rebecca Chittenden for the training on Safeguarding which was provided to Members prior to the meeting.
- (2) The Chair welcomed the Authority's Monitoring Officer, Bhupinder Gill, to the meeting.
- (3) The Chair welcomed the Authority's Independent Person, Jenny Waterman, to the meeting.
- (4) The Chair, on behalf of Officers and Members, gave thanks to Dan Daley for his dedicated service to the Authority over the last ten years after it was announced he has stood down as a Member
- (5) The Chair welcomed Mike Sole to his first meeting of the Authority.

17. Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 28 April 2022

(Item A6)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Audit and Governance meeting held on 28 April 2022 be noted.

18. Minutes of the Authority held on 5 July 2022

(Item A5)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Authority meeting held on 5 July 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

19. Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2022

(Item B1 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered the draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan text for 2023 together with the proposed wording to the questionnaire included within it. The Authority was also

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requested to approve the revised ten-year risk assessment for publication alongside the Plan.

- (2) Members debated the increased use of electricity saving goods as well as cheaper methods being used for heating and insulating homes, all of which people are turning to due to financial struggles.
- (3) On the back of the above debate, Mr Booth raised a question around the regulation of solar panels/lithium batteries as he has seen an increased usage of these across many homes in Kent. Director, Response and Resilience said that Kent Fire and Rescue Service is the national lead on new technologies and that the increased usage of these and other methods have been a challenge. Director, Response and Resilience offered to meet with Mr Booth outside the meeting to discuss in more detail the work being undertaken nationally.
- (4) Mr Love asked whether it was possible to add more context around financial options in relation to Council Tax so this is more relatable for reader. Assistant Director, Corporate Services responded by saying that he will explore this with colleagues.
- (5) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the text for the draft Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2023, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for consultation subject to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, being authorised to make any minor amendments that may be necessary.
 - (b) the revisions to the long-term assessment of possible changes in the physical, political and technological landscape, as detailed in Appendix 2, be approved.

20. Finance Update 2022/23

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

- (1) The Authority received the first budget monitoring report for the 2022/23 financial year as well as an update on a range of other financial matters, including a proposal to bring in-house a vehicle servicing and maintenance function as well as an increase to the budget allocation for the proposed redevelopment at Ashford.
- (2) Mr Booth asked whether any capital expenditure items will suffer due to the recent pay negotiations and other financial pressures to which the Director, Finance and Corporate Services explained that her team are constantly monitoring the finances both in the short term and long term. She explained that frontline activity remains paramount but acknowledged that the next four years will be a challenge financially.
- (3) In response to a question raised by Mr Booth around how many sites this Service has that are shared with other partner agencies across Kent, Assistant Director, Corporate Services explained that there are 29 sites across the estate that the Service allows partners to use. He added that this benefits from the sharing of intelligence, local knowledge and has a practical element of working together.
- (4) In response to the comment raised by Mr Booth around shared sites, Mr Love asked whether the relationship is reciprocated by our partners in allowing this Service to share their sites to which the Assistant Director, Corporate Services responded by saying that the only shared site currently is the Joint Control Room, shared with Kent Police, however our partner sites are used as and when needed for training purposes.
- (5) Members placed on record their thanks to the Director of Finance and her team for an excellent set of financial reports.
- (6) RESOLVED that:

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- (a) funding for any resulting overspend from reducing the revenue contributions to capital, be approved in principle.
- (b) allocate a further £1.2m to fund the cost of the redevelopment of Ashford Fire Station and the new Live Fire Training facility, be approved.
- (c) bring in-house the heavy fleet and vehicle servicing and maintenance function, be approved.
- (d) the proposed lease arrangements for the premises currently used by the Commercial Services Group, as part of the in-house arrangements of the fleet servicing and maintenance function, be approved.
- (e) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

21. Development of the 2023-2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

(Item B3 - Presentation by Director, Finance and Corporate Services)

- (1) The Authority received a presentation from the Director, Finance and Corporate Services on the development of the 2023-2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- (2) Members placed on record their thanks again to the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and her team for their hard work in looking after the Authority's finances, in particular the challenges they are facing under the current economic climate.
- (3) Mr Chard placed on record his own thanks to the Director, Finance and Corporate Services and her team for the reassurances they provide by taking a long-term view in managing the Authority's budget.
- (4) Members requested a copy of the slides electronically.
- (5) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the assumptions being adopted to develop the Authority's 2023 - 2027 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, as described in the presentation, be approved in principle.
 - (b) the remaining contents of the presentation be noted.

22. Governance and Policy Updates

(Item B4 – Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered a report which covered the following governance topics:
 - A. Performance Assurance Statement
 - B. Networked Fire Service Control Partnership
 - C. Legislative Update
 - D. Recently Refreshed Policies
- (2) RESOLVED that:
 - (a) the Performance Assurance Statement, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (b) the Networked Fire Service Control Partnership becomes the Authority's partner in the event of 999 call volumes in Kent needing to be flowed to another service for call handling, be approved.
 - (c) the remaining contents of the report be noted.

23. Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22

(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) This report has already been reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2022 and is now recommended to the Authority for approval.
- (3) RESOLVED that
 - (a) this year-end report on treasury management activity for 2021/22 as recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee, be approved.

24. Mid-Year Treasury and Investment Update 2022/23

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

- (1) The Authority received a mid-year report on treasury management activity for 2022/23 as well as proposals of the necessary delegated approvals for this treasury function. This report has already been reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2022 and is now recommended to the Authority for approval.
- (2) RESOLVED that
 - (a) the mid-year report on treasury management activity for 2022/23, be approved.
 - (b) the roles and responsibilities of Officers and Members in the treasury process, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
 - (c) the revised reporting requirements to the Prudential Indicators, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

25. Calendar of Meetings 2023/24

(Item B7 – Report by Clerk of the Authority)

- (1) The Authority considered the proposed calendar of Member meetings and events for 2023/24.
- (2) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) The proposed calendar of Member meetings and other events for 2023/24 be approved.

26. 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 first report on the activities undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee in its first year of operation and in turn the report demonstrates the effectiveness of this Committee in assessing and maintaining the Authority's internal control environment and governance arrangements.

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- (2) Mr Chard placed on record his thanks to Vince 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 presentation be noted.

27. Information Update

(Item C2 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Authority considered information on: -
 - A. The Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
 - B. Inspection Update
 - C. Performance Update
 - D. Response and Resilience Update
 - E. Prevention, Protection, Customer Engagement and Safety Update
 - F. Annual Update on Members Standards and Allowances
 - G. Freedom of Information Update
 - H. Pensions and Pension Board Update
- (2) On D above, Mr Booth thanked the Service for the way it dealt with the challenging fires throughout the summer. In response to a question he then raised on behalf of local residents around inaccessible water hydrants, Director, Response and Resilience responded by saying that the Service has a Water Services Team who liaise with the water companies around damaged or inaccessible water hydrants. He added that if residents do have any concerns, the team would be happy to meet with them and discuss in more detail.
- (3) RESOLVED that: -
 - (a) the contents of the report be noted.