

AT A MEETING of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Thursday, 24th January, 2019

Chairman:

* Councillor Christopher Carter

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| * Councillor Liz Fairhurst | * Councillor Sharon Mintoff |
| * Councillor Roz Chadd | * Councillor Roger Price |
| * Councillor Jason Fazackarley | * Councillor David Simpson |
| * Councillor Jonathan Glen | * Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE |
| * Councillor Geoffrey Hockley | |

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:
Councillor Tig Outlaw – Isle of Wight Council
Michael Lane – Police and Crime Commissioner
James Payne – Chief Executive - OPCC

148. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present and no apologies were noted.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

150. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

151. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations received for this meeting.

152. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman congratulated the newly appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Steve Apter, following a national recruitment campaign. A full handover would be organised ahead of Andy Bowers' retirement in June. Chief Fire Officer Neil Odin shared that there had been a good response to the advert, which proved that Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service was held in high regard and he looked forward to working with Steve Apter, who was highly experienced.

Cllr Rhydian Vaughan was congratulated for being made a Member of the British Empire for his public and political services. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Andy Bowers and Firefighter Jasper Taylor were also recognised for their dedication with the Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service.

The Chairman announced that a 'Dying To Work' protocol had been signed at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, which was focussed on giving appropriate support to employees and their families who were terminally ill. The Fire Authority all sent its condolences to Firefighter David Barker's family, after David's recent passing.

The Chairman confirmed that future meetings of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority would take place at Service Headquarters, Eastleigh, in the new building and a tour for Members would take place in due course. An official opening was planned for later in the year.

153. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENTS AND COMMENTS**

Cllr Vaughan confirmed that an initial meeting regarding performance management had taken place with Shantha Dickinson and another was arranged for February.

154. **PROPOSED CREATION OF A NEW COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA) TO INCLUDE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS OF HAMPSHIRE, ISLE OF WIGHT, PORTSMOUTH AND SOUTHAMPTON**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding the proposed creation of a new combined fire authority for the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire. The proposals followed a business case put forward to the Authority on the 14 June 2018 and a subsequent twelve week consultation across all of the authorities areas.

The consultation had resulted in 311 responses, 300 of which were from individuals. Whilst this was a proportionally low response, representing circa. 0.015% of the areas population, it was seen as reassuring that there was apparent little concern from the public regarding the proposals. All views submitted had been analysed and considered, and 53% of the responses were in support of the proposals.

The Chief Fire Officer emphasised that whilst the concerns raised were proportionally low, all had been addressed within the report and the majority were a result of a lack of understanding as to the arrangements proposed.

Discussion pertaining Paragraph 24 in the report summarised the risks and benefits to the proposed combined fire authority, but emphasised the top priority for officers was to protect the public and maintain an effective Fire Service, with efficiency and effectiveness being immediate benefits.

The Chief Finance Officer took Members through the finance section of the report and highlighted the fourth bullet point in paragraph 37, which confirmed

just over £4m of liabilities that would need addressing over the next five years. This had reduced by £1m from previously presented figures due to further work on the vehicle programme. The liabilities are what was expected and whilst the business case would need updating for 2019/20, most positions would stay the same with no material impact. Should the proposals be agreed, the Home Office would be approached regarding funding to cover the transitional arrangements.

The possible governance and proportionality arrangements were addressed in paragraph 49 of the report, and Members were reassured that this was something that would be managed at a later date, in consultation with the Home Office. All views would be taken into account and nothing was yet affirmed regarding the proportionality.

In debate, some Members shared their concerns regarding the finance aspects of the proposals and the impacts these would have on Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS), as HFRS had good budgets and reserves for work and improvements to Hampshire stations. It was questioned whether the money Hampshire tax payers had paid should be spent on stations on the Isle of Wight that needed more urgent attention. The Chief Finance Officer reassured the Authority that technically no money was explicitly put aside for station improvements, and this was currently covered by borrowing built into the Medium Term Financial Plan. It was hoped that the Home Office would be able to offer upfront financial support, but formal talks could not take place until a proposal was approved and ready to take forward.

The concerns raised by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on page 84 of the pack were highlighted and it was confirmed that meetings with the FBU since the consultation document had been composed were very positive and the concerns listed had been addressed. Subsequently, the FBU were now in support of the proposals.

Members agreed that approaching the Home Office for funding was very important and something that should be incorporated into the recommendations should the proposals be approved.

The Chairman welcomed comments from Cllr Tig Outlaw, Isle of Wight Council and Michael Lane, the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Cllr Outlaw told the Authority how the staff that had been met with understood the benefits of having a CFA and agreed that it was the right way forward. He echoed concerns regarding proportionality but was assured that the new Authority would represent the whole area equally and there would be no segregation as a result of proportionality. The Isle of Wight had £700k of reserves to contribute towards the plans, which was a significant amount for the Authority and would look financial contributions to be more equal going forward in the long term.

Michael Lane emphasised the importance of keeping people safe, and felt that this was the most effective way to continue for both Authorities and in the public's best interest. The Police and Crime Commissioner welcomed being

involved in the meeting and thanked Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire Authority for their work.

Geoff Howsego and his team were also thanked for their hard work during the business case and consultation process to date.

RESOLVED:

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority:

- A) Noted the outcomes of the consultation exercise that did not suggest significant public concern or a statistically significant view for or against proposed CFA; and
- B) Agreed to proceed with the submission of a proposal to the secretary of state for the creation of a new Combined Fire Authority covering the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and Southampton area on the basis of the previously published business case. The Authority delegated authority to prepare and submit the formal submission, along with an application to the Home Office for transitional funding, to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

155. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was no need to exclude press and public at the meeting, but had it been required, this would have been done due to the likeliness, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public had been present during this item there would have been disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the minute.

156. EXEMPT MINUTE FROM THE 5 DECEMBER FULL AUTHORITY MEETING

The Minute from the 5 December 2018 Full Authority meeting was approved in open session.

Chairman,