

**BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

**6 FEBRUARY 2009**

**PRESENT**

Councillors: A Carter, A Duggan (Chairman), D Ross, J Saunders, J Street and S Timoney

**08-09/fa/070 APOLOGIES**

Councillors Baker, Bullock, Davies, Gwynne-Jones, Riaz and Shingler had tendered their apologies.

No CFA Borough/District Council representatives attended.

**08-09/fa/071 COMMUNICATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Lee Moon, FBU representative, to the meeting.

***FRS Circular 5/2009***

In accordance with Minute 08-09/fa/055 of the meeting held on 12 December 2008, the Chairman advised that FRS Circular 5/2009 Fire and Resilience Programme Highlights – December 2008 / January 2009 had been issued and was to be placed on the Members' Page of the Service Website.

**08-09/fa/072 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

No Member declared a personal or prejudicial interest in any matters on the Agenda.

**08-09/fa/073 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 12 December 2008 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

**08-09/fa/074 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members noted that no questions had been received in accordance with the public participation scheme approved at the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 5 April 2000 (minute 99/fa/94 refers).

**08-09/fa/075 DUTY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS**

CFO Smith reported on the implementation of new shift and day duty systems, which had been reviewed by an internal focus team which included the Vice-Chair and subject to peer review by officers and members of other Fire Authorities. The Community Risk Management Scrutiny Group had also considered this matter on 21 January 2009.

The proposed changes would make the working day more productive, provide more time for operational training and the maintenance of operational equipment, as well as give more time for community safety work. Members noted that the new systems would be reviewed in a year's time to ensure they were achieving their purpose.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted and the new shift duty and day duty systems be endorsed.

### **08-09/fa/076 CIVIL CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS**

Due to the cost, many fire and rescue authorities had declined to take part in proposed national arrangements to ensure that emergency cover was in place for civil contingencies and were considering the issue on a local basis.

The CFO updated Members on the options and the modelling that would need to take place, including discussions with the trade unions.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That, the report be noted and the Human Resources Scrutiny Group be appraised of progress concerning consultation and negotiation with Trade Unions until a final agreement is reached, at which stage a full paper should be presented to the CFA.

### **08-09/fa/077 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

The Secretary reported that The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Areas and Membership of Public Bodies in Bedfordshire and Cheshire) Order 2008 had now been approved by Parliament, and was in force.

As a result, the District Council Representatives listed in his report to the last meeting were able to attend CFA meetings until 1 April 2009, and would become Members of the CFA from that date, until the local government elections (or their Authority's AGM).

The dates of these AGMs were not currently known but, if they were not held in time for the CFA to give notice of its AGM for 30 June 2009, that meeting might need to be scheduled to a date in July 2009. If this was to be the case, the CFA would need to consider the position at the Statement of Accounts meeting on 30 June 2009.

A further report would be made to the next meeting.

It was suggested that the Audit Commission be contacted to seek confirmation that a qualified opinion would not be given on the Statement of Accounts if the CFA was prevented from holding of the Statement of Accounts meeting by 30 June 2009.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That:

1. The report be noted.
2. The Annual Governance Statement meeting be held on 17 June 2009.
3. The Statement of Accounts meeting and the Annual General Meeting be held on 30 June 2009, subject to the appointment of Members by the constituent authorities.

### **08-09/fa/07 PERFORMANCE ACHIEVEMENT SCRUTINY GROUP: 14 JANUARY 2009**

Members considered the draft minutes of the Performance Achievement Scrutiny Group held on 14 January 2009.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That,

1. the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2009 be noted.  
*General Reserves*
2. the level of General Reserves for 2009/10 be set at £2.237M.

*Publication Scheme*

3. the submitted publication scheme, based on the Information Commissioner's suggested Model Publication Scheme, be adopted.
4. the submitted Publication Scheme Guide be adopted and publicised.
5. the Secretary, in conjunction with the Strategic Support Manager, review charges for documents to be made available on the website.
6. the Secretary, in conjunction with the Strategic Support Manager, be granted delegated authority to review and, from time to time, amend the Publication Scheme
7. Officers be authorised to update the list of published documents in the scheme as appropriate.

**08-09/fa/079 COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY GROUP: 21 JANUARY 2009**

At the meeting, Members had agreed that the name of the Group should be changed from the Integrated Risk Management Scrutiny Group to the Community Risk Management Scrutiny Group.

Councillor Saunders presented the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2009.

With regard to a Member's question on the abolition of Standards of Fire Cover, CFO Smith advised that these had been replaced by standards applicable to the community to ensure the deployment of resources more effectively and getting to incidents in good time. It was important to recognise that life risks were the Service priority.

As noted at the last meeting, the Service was currently in consultation on these proposals as part of the Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2009 – 2012.

**RESOLVED:**

That, the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2009 be noted.

**08-09/fa/080 HUMAN RESOURCES SCRUTINY GROUP: 28 JANUARY 2009**

Councillor Street presented the draft minutes of the Human Resources Scrutiny Group held on 28 January 2009.

**RESOLVED:**

That,

1. the draft minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2009 be noted.
2. the review of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme by the Government Actuaries Department be noted.

**08-09/fa/081 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – 2008/09**

Members noted the fourth monitoring report on the management of the 2008/09 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

No agreement had yet been reached on the APT&C Staff Pay Award due on 1 April 2008. An offer of 2.45% had been made by the Employers, but rejected by the unions, and the matter had been referred to arbitration. However, the interim offer of 2.45% had been paid.

To date, £108,500 had been allocated from the Prices Contingency of £165,000, leaving a balance of £56,500.

Negotiations were continuing between FRAML and the Financial Services Authority (FSA) for the release of the original premiums paid on 1 April 2008 but it was not anticipated that these would be concluded for a number of months.

The two main property capital projects – Dunstable Community Fire Station and the rest and study accommodation at Stopsley Fire Station – and seven other projects were now complete. In addition, seven others were in progress and expected to be completed by 31 March 2009. It was anticipated that a number of minor projects (circa £75,000) would slip into 2009/10.

A number of vehicles had been delayed from the manufacturers/builders and thirteen were currently outstanding, of which only nine are expected to be delivered by 31 March 2009. This would result in slippage of £380,000 into 2009/10.

**RESOLVED:**

That, the report be noted.

**08-09/fa/082 BUDGET 2009/10 TO 2011/12**

CFO Smith referred to the Members' Budget Workshops held on 12 December 2008 and 14 January 2009, which had considered the detail of the proposed budget as set out in the submitted Budget Book.

The proposed budget would involve an increase in Council Tax for 2009/10 of 3.5% for all properties.

Reference was also made to Appendix 7 of the Budget Book where Members were asked to consider continuing to apply Option 1 - the Regulatory Method - to discharge their statutory duty to make prudent provision in the accounts for Minimum Revenue Provision.

The recommendations of the report were considered separately.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

1. The Revenue Budget be approved at £28,286,559, including a contingency for pay and prices inflation of £729,000, and reduced by contributions of £443,815 from ear-marked and general reserves to £27,842,744.

2. This budget requirement of £27,842,744 be met through:

Revenue Support Grant £2,089,781

Business Rate Income £9,054,005

and that subject to (3) below the Fire Authority Precept requirement be determined at £16,698,958.

3. The precept in (2) above be reduced by £38,185, being the Fire Authority's share of the estimated net surplus on the Council Tax Collection Funds for 2008/09 for each of the Borough/District/Unitary Councils, to £16,660,773.

4. That pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Finance Acts 1992 and 1999 and all other relevant statutory powers, the Secretary of the Authority issue Precepts in the necessary form to each of the Borough/Unitary Councils indicated in Column 1, requiring those Authorities to make payments of the sum indicated in Column 2 in eleven equal instalments, and payments for the Authority's share of the estimated surplus or

deficits on the Council Tax Collection Funds for 2008/09, in ten equal instalments on the agreed dates, of the sum indicated in Column 3.

<b>Unitary Councils (1)</b>	<b>£ (2)</b>	<b>£ (3)</b>
Bedford Borough	4,476,679	71,362
Luton Borough	4,507,609	(45,538)
Central Bedfordshire	7,676,485	12,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,660,773</b>	<b>38,185</b>

5. That the amount of Council Tax calculated, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to be payable in respect of each category of dwelling be confirmed as follows:

<b>Valuation Band</b>	<b>Tax Payable Compared to Band D (Expressed in Fractions)</b>	<b>Council Tax for Band £</b>
A	6/9	54.42
B	7/9	63.49
C	8/9	72.56
<b>D</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>81.63</b>
E	11/9	99.77
F	13/9	117.91
G	15/9	136.05
H	2	163.26

6. Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Authority continues to use the 'Regulatory Method' to discharge its statutory duty to make a prudent provision in the accounts for Minimum Revenue Provision.
7. The submitted Budget Book be endorsed in its entirety.

#### **08-09/fa/083 SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Scheme of Delegation by the Combined Fire Authority to the Chief Fire Officer and its Officers (the Scheme) was included in the Members' Handbook and published on the Service Website.

The Scheme was last revised in June 2007.

Following a review, it was proposed that Part 2 (A) and Part 3 (5) be updated to reflect changes made by Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005.

A proposed revision to the Scheme was submitted for Members' consideration.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That, the proposed revision to the Scheme of Delegation be agreed.

#### **08-09/fa/084 INFORMATION BULLETIN**

Members received a Bulletin containing information on various matters relating to the Fire and Rescue Service.