

# ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

## Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



### ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 DECEMBER 2010 AT 10:00 HOURS

#### Present:

Councillor B Aspinell  
Councillor S Barker  
Councillor K Bentley (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor R Callender  
Councillor P Channer  
Councillor F Evans  
Councillor A Hedley (Chairman)  
Councillor A E Holland  
Councillor E Johnson  
Councillor C Kent  
Councillor J Knapman  
Councillor S MacPherson

Councillor G McEwen  
Councillor M Miller  
Councillor D Morris  
Councillor J Reeves  
Councillor C Riley  
Councillor J Roberts  
Councillor M Skeels  
Councillor T C Smith-Hughes  
Councillor A Turrell  
Councillor R Walters  
Councillor E Webster  
Councillor P Wexham

The following Officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive & County Emergency Planning Officer, David Johnson  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Gordon Hunter  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Adam Eckley  
Finance Director & Treasurer, Mike Clayton  
T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Paul Hill  
T/Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Mark Wilson  
Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Philip Thomson  
ORH, Paul Murray  
Minute Taker, Trisha Adams

#### **78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pearson.

Councillor Webster was present from item 85, Councillor McEwen was present until item 89 and Councillor Holland was present until item 92.

#### **79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman and Councillor Aspinell declared a personal interest in item 88 in respect of trade union membership.

#### **80. MINUTES**

The Authority received the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2010.

**Resolved:**

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

**81. POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2010 were received.

**82. AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW COMMITTEE- MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2010 were received.

**83. AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2010 were received.

**84. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Meeting with Control

The Chairman had met with Control personnel at Hutton.

FiRebreak pass outs/meeting the young people

The Chairman had attended pass outs at Basildon, Clacton, Corringham, Harlow and Maldon fire stations.

Fire Station Open Days

The Chairman had attended fire station open days at Basildon, Billericay, Brentwood and Orsett.

Fire Station Visit

The Chairman had visited Chelmsford fire station and had spoken with a number of the watches.

Charity Golf Day

Essex Fire Authority raised approximately £500 at a joint charity day with Essex Police Authority. Money raised was donated to SNAP, a charity that helps Essex families with children who have special needs and disabilities.

Handover of four retired appliances to Malawi High Commissioner

The Chairman advised Members of the above enjoyable presentation. He said that four appliances were being shipped out to Malawi (in conjunction with BP), and that these four appliances would be the backbone of the Malawi Fire Service.

ECFRS National Legal Seminar

The Chairman congratulated Roy Carter who had recently been admitted to the roll as a Solicitor of the Senior Courts. It is believed that Mr Carter is the first serving uniformed Officer in Great Britain to qualify as a Solicitor. The Chairman advised Members that the seminar had been very well attended and profitable, the seminar had been hosted by Philip Thomson and had had very good speakers, he thoroughly recommended it.

The Chairman advised his attendance at the below items.

- Managers' Development & Awareness Day at Rayleigh Weir
- Emergency Planning Meetings
- Fire Commission
- Official Air Search Launch
- Visit with Fire Minister to Kelvedon Park and Southend Young Firefighter Facility
- LGA Fire Futures Seminar at London Fire Brigade
- Essex Casualty Reduction Board
- Resolve Flood Emergency Workshop
- Remembrance Day at Kelvedon Park
- Inaugural Meeting of ECFRS Transformation Consultation Group
- Visit by ECC Safer & Stronger Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
- National Olympic Security Oversight Group

#### Individual Meetings with MPs

The Chairman advised separate meetings with Robert Halfon MP and Priti Patel MP.

#### Meeting with Chairman of Police Authority, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer

The Chairman advised the above meeting. Its purpose was to discuss collaborative working.

#### Presentation with CFO at S E Essex Forum

The presentation had been at the request of Councillor Roy Howard.

#### BAFSA Sprinkler Conference, Gateshead

The Chairman attended the above event with ADO Andy Stapleton

#### Briefing to MPs

The Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer held a briefing with six MPs and eight MP research assistants. Attention focussed on Agenda Items 8, 9 and 10 of today's meeting and the Comprehensive Spending Review.

### **85. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2010-11**

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/108/10 provided an initial assessment of the financial position of the Authority for the next four years, following announcements made by Government in the Comprehensive Spending Review. It assessed the scale of necessary savings and looked at options for the Authority to balance its budget over the period. The report also asked Members for an initial decision as to whether the Authority would maintain the current level of Council Tax in 2011/12.

Councillor Smith-Hughes said that the latest information he had received was that the consultation on the Local Government Settlement would be announced on 13 December 2010.

Councillor Barker said that in her view the report's title should have referenced planning to the year 2015-16. Councillor Barker thanked Officers for meetings prior to the meeting. She said that Members had received detail and were clear on the task facing them. Councillor Barker recommended Officers should be asked to work on the basis of 0% increase in Council Tax for the year 2011-12. Councillor Walters supported the 0% increase, he said that it was clear that other authorities were going the same route, it would be unwise to be out of step with other districts and counties, further the public had an expectation of zero increase. Councillor Roberts agreed, he said that the public was hurting because of cuts implemented by Government in 2011-12 and that all being well, by 2014-15 things would be improving and the public could take the increase. He said that the Authority should cross the bridge when it got there. Councillor Smith-Hughes was of the view that there was no option. He said that it should be made clear that it was a decision for one year (2011-12) and would

be looked at again in the future. Councillor Smith-Hughes said that in 3-4 years the Authority would be short by 2½ % when the grant was removed, and in effect the Government was bribing authorities with their own money, top-slicing the money off the grant which authorities would have received in other ways. However, there was effectively no choice – the Authority had to understand what people wanted. Councillor McEwen was of the view that “a bird in the hand was worth having”.

Councillor Aspinell asked about funding with regard to the expansion of Essex' population. The Finance Director & Treasurer said that there was an assumption that the tax base would grow ½% (approximately £260-70k per year over the period).

Councillor Barker proposed a Council Tax freeze in 2011-12. The proposal was seconded by Councillor McEwen.

**Resolved:**

That:

1. The detailed budget plans should include provision for a Council Tax freeze in 2011/12
2. The changes to the level of funding from the Government over the period of the spending review be noted; and
3. That Officers should bring forward plans to secure a balanced budget over the spending review period, including the use of the Authority's reserve to allow for the phased achievement of agreed savings.

**86. ECFRS TRANSFORMATION – FUNCTIONAL AND DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS**

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/109/10 presented a summary of the work commissioned by the Strategic Management Board to review its functions and departments in support of delivering the necessary savings required by the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Councillor Smith-Hughes said that he did not have a problem with endorsing the strategic direction, he asked how the Service was keeping staff involved and asked for assurance that there was communication and consultation with staff advising what the Authority was doing and why. DCFO Eckley advised that all stakeholders were being engaged with.

Councillor Barker referred to the Performance Management Review. She suggested that Members be given an idea of the rationale and relevance of the whole suite of KPIs and that Members should have oversight of what would be added and removed. DCFO Eckley advised that the DCLG had commissioned a review of all national indicators. The Service would bring its suggested response to the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that substantive changes would be brought to the full Authority.

Councillor Knapman said that what was coming across was that Officers were looking at every aspect, not picking and choosing. He said that it was a thorough review, exactly where the Service should be going. Councillor Walters said that it was a no nonsense review, an excellent platform and that the Service was going ahead on a very good basis. He congratulated Officers for the factual review which made sense.

The Vice-Chairman fully endorsed the comments of Councillor Knapman and Councillor Roberts. He said that it was a small report which underlined a huge amount of work. The Vice-Chairman said that there were difficult times to come and that the report should give the Authority confidence that the Service was led by excellent Officers. Councillor Riley said that Members had been fully involved too. He referenced the Members' Task & Finish

Group involvement, and said that the reviews had been carried out by both Members and Officers. The Chairman said that evidence-based decisions were easier to make.

**Resolved:**

That the following were all agreed:

1. The vision and high level action plan set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of report EFA/109/10 as the basis for the development of the Corporate Plan 2011-2014.
2. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board for Information Communication Technology.
3. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board for the Finance function.
4. The direction already being taken by the Strategic Management Board in relation to Procurement, Stores and Logistics.
5. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board for the Fleet Services function.
6. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board for Property Asset Management.
7. That progress was being made on the review of the organisation's Human Resources and Training functions and that once completed the outcomes would be presented to the Fire Authority for consideration.
8. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board within Performance Management and Improvement function.
9. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board for the Health and Safety function.
10. That progress was being made on the review of the organisation's Service Delivery arrangements and that once completed the outcomes would be presented to the Fire Authority for consideration.
11. The direction recommended by the Strategic Management Board for the Corporate Communications, Media and Marketing department.

**87. FIRE COVER REVIEW 2010**

Report EFA/110/10 sought Members' approval for proposals to make savings which included reductions to operational service delivery (front line) costs.

The Chief Fire Officer thanked DCFO Hunter and Mr Paul Murray (ORH Planning & Modelling Consultants for Health & Emergency Services) for the detailed report. The Chief Fire Officer said that he, other senior Officers and the Chairman had met with Essex MPs to lobby for budget support but MPs had said that current funding was not affordable. The Chief Fire Officer said that there came a point where it was no longer realistic to fight cuts and that reductions in funding would have to be managed. The Chief Fire Officer said that he intended to keep Essex communities safe with no uniformed staff redundancies, that the 2/2 shift system was being retained and that the Service was looking at new ways of innovatively generating income.

The Chief Fire Officer advised the Authority that he had sought to consult with the representative bodies and had met with the RFU but despite four requests, the FBU had failed to respond to his invitations. The Chief Fire Officer referred to a letter from the FBU to

Members which advised their formal response to budget cuts. He said that he would be writing to the FBU.

The Chief Fire Officer said that it was inescapable that budget cuts would impact on the way the frontline service was managed.

Councillor Turrell asked about consultation with staff including back office staff. She asked for confirmation that personnel were kept informed. The Chief Fire Officer reiterated his attempts to meet with the FBU. DCFO Hunter said that a comprehensive communication programme was ongoing including the Strategic Management Board meeting with all staff.

Councillor McEwen said that the report was a brilliant piece of work, a complicated business that had been put into perspective. He was pleased to see potential savings without losing fire stations or people. Councillor McEwen referred to the operational response and survivability rates, he said that a first class balance had been struck. Councillor McEwen referred to recommendation 2 vi of the report, he was impressed with it as a starting point - it was safe and realised savings, he thoroughly supported the recommendations of the report.

Councillor Knapman said that the report was very informative and eye-opening, he said that the call out rate of 2.5% was an incredibly low count, however even if the call outs were at zero we would still want a Fire Service. Councillor Knapman said that it was not easy to make decisions but they needed to be made, the Service could not continue to operate as now. Councillor Knapman referred to recommendation 2(i) of the report, he said that firefighters put their lives on the line perhaps once in six months and that the Authority needed to value that and there was an obligation to save firefighters' jobs. Councillor Knapman referred to recommendation 2(v) of the report and asked what it actually meant to agree to "Saving the jobs of our existing staff as *'far as is reasonably practical'* ", Councillor Knapman said that saving jobs was a priority, there was a difference between saving jobs and saving posts. The Chief Fire Officer said that he was confident of saving jobs but the Authority could not give an absolute guarantee as it did not yet have all the information about formula grant changes, or leavers' dates. The Chief Fire Officer suggested that the Authority's reserves would pay personnel but he was precluded from giving an absolute guarantee. Councillor Knapman queried the parameters of the recommendation as in his view it should state that the Authority would save jobs, if it could not be done it would not mean the statement was inaccurate. The Chairman said that he understood Councillor Knapman's concerns, however following the spending review the Authority might not be able to deliver that guarantee. The Chief Fire Officer suggested that if he were explicit regarding guarantees that could not be delivered, personnel would be of the view that he could not be trusted, in his view he needed to be up front and honest. Councillor Knapman said that he would go along with the recommendation. DCFO Hunter said the safety of firefighters and maintaining safety of the community was the first priority.

Councillor Kent said that she could not support the report without detail of major changes. She said that there were high risk areas of the County in relation to station locality and that the Government had said that cuts should be made without hitting front-line services. The Chairman said that the report was looking at the principles for going forward, that the information Councillor Kent required was not known and it would be premature to speculate. It was anticipated that detailed options would be presented to the Policy & Strategy Committee in January 2011. The Chief Fire Officer said that he would be concerned if any member of the Authority could not agree to the principles in the report as they were specifically about keeping communities safe and saving jobs.

Councillor Smith-Hughes was of the view that the Authority was being practical, he said that categorical assurances could not be given and that Members needed to agree principles for Officers to try and work on. Councillor Smith-Hughes said that the Authority had reserves and that there was a good chance of avoiding redundancies, that the principles of the report

recommendations were right and that the detailed information would be seen at the Policy & Strategy Committee in January. The Chairman referred back to the meeting with Essex MPs the day before, and said that it had been a similar discussion; he could not tell Members what he did not know himself. Councillor Aspinell enquired how many MPs had attended the meeting. The Chief Fire Officer advised that it had been six and 8 or 9 representatives. In response to Councillor Kent's enquiry the Chief Fire Officer said that there had been no decision about station closures.

Councillor Walters said that the report could be clearly understood, that even the layman would see the strengths of the proposal. He welcomed the aspiration of no station closures and where possible protecting jobs and was pleased that the report heightened the strength of retained firefighters. Councillor Walters said that if you asked members of the public whether response came from retained or wholetime firefighters they were not interested and did not know, they did not see that one station provided a better service than another, they wanted the service delivered and did not care how. Councillor Walters said that he was pleased to go forward with standards high and protecting existing staff.

Councillor Riley referenced correspondence from the FBU which he said had been scaremongering about the cuts that the Authority was going to make. Councillor Riley referred to a recent fatal incident which had been attended by personnel from Rayleigh Weir. He said that all the personnel had been affected by the loss and it did not matter to the public what shift system responded to an incident. Councillor Riley said that the proposals would support and improve the Service but regrettably could not stop death.

Councillor Barker said that she was thankful for the use of reserves to cover wages, she asked if the proposals of the report would tide the Authority over to 2015-16 when it could potentially face setting a steep increase in Council Tax to offset the 2011-12 Council Tax freeze. Councillor Barker said that in her view management tended to represent the whole-time aspect of the Service, and that with changes in crewing there would be large numbers of retained personnel. She suggested that a senior management post was dedicated to the retained workforce. DCFO Eckley, said that uniformed personnel were of single status and historically retained personnel had operated different vehicles and equipment. This was no longer the case, the job was the same for whole-time and retained personnel and the Service had invested heavily in all areas. DCFO Eckley advised that DCFO Hunter's directorate managed operational personnel.

Councillor Channer said that the report was honest and fair, it had sound wording which she supported.

Councillor Aspinell thanked DCFO Hunter for his report and account. Councillor Aspinell said that it was a little sad that the Authority always had to defend itself against the FBU which said 'cuts cost lives', he said that the proposal was the way forward on known income. Councillor Aspinell said that there would be large incomes from alternative areas e.g. shared facilities and Workshops that these would come to the pot to be shared out in future. DCFO Eckley confirmed that the Service continued to follow up opportunities for shared services and collaborative working with other F&RSs and local authorities in order to reduce back office costs.

The Vice-Chairman said that financially what was lying ahead had not yet been felt. He said that the Authority had two main principles, to provide the best service to the people of Essex and although it could not be said to anyone that their job was absolutely guaranteed it would guarantee uniformed posts as far it as it could. The Vice-Chairman advised that he had attended conferences along with other Fire Authorities, and that Essex was in a far better position than many others in that it was not about to make drastic cuts.

In response to the Vice-Chairman's enquiry regarding the night response times, DCFO Hunter advised that personnel were in bed prior to the shout.

**Resolved** (Voted against – Councillor Kent):

That:

1. As part of the Authority's overall strategy to make savings in order to meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Service Management team includes reductions to its operational service delivery (front line) costs.
2. The savings would be made using the following principles:
  - i. Maintenance of an effective, efficient and safe operational response by ensuring that no reduction is made to the number of fire appliances that are sent (weight of attack) to life threatening emergencies
  - ii. Maintenance of an effective and efficient prevention and protection service delivery.
  - iii. Maintenance of safe communities.
  - iv. Maintenance of operational resilience.
  - v. Saving the jobs of existing staff as far as is reasonably practical.
  - vi. Changes to fire station crewing systems will be the starting point wherever possible and, as far as is reasonably practicable, before reductions in fire appliances or fire station closures are made.
  - vii. Thereafter minimum reduction in the number of fire appliances.
  - viii. Thereafter minimum fire station closures.
3. A report be submitted to the Policy and Strategy meeting in January providing detailed options for Members to consider. The option details would include all changes and the fire stations involved. The report would also include a recommendation from the Service Management team as to which of the options is their preferred option based on their professional opinion in conjunction with the above mentioned principles.

## **88. APPRAISAL REVIEW OF THE FACILITIES PROVIDED TO TRADES UNION OFFICIALS**

Members considered Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/111/10 which detailed the outcome of an external review into the financial and resource-based implications of supporting Trade Union facilities arrangements within the workplace.

Councillor Riley said that the money being discussed was tax payers' money, that it was a time of large cuts and in his view things had been allowed to get out of hand. Councillor Morris said that he was surprised the Authority was using tax payers' money to fund trade union activity. He did not have a problem with the activity but it should be funded by the Unions themselves. Councillor McEwen referred to the large and lengthy amount of correspondence received from the FBU. He said that the time dedicated by the Service and the Authority in order to respond should be taken into account – that the Unions should be paying the Authority a percentage. Councillor McEwen said that the Unions should be defending its Members' rights, he objected that they were trying to run the Authority.

Councillor Knapman said that the FBU and the Fire Authority should be on the same side pushing in the same direction, he said that firefighters should have real meaningful input into how the Service was run. Councillor Knapman said that Trades Union facilities gave members time off, not money, however he was totally shocked at the aggregate sum of £452k per year, he said that it was difficult to believe – Union activities should not impact on



productivity. Councillor Knapman asked how the amount compared with other Fire Authorities, he said that Essex had to address the problem, it had reviewed everything else and pared down, that he had no objection to proper duties but the bill should be a lot less. The Chief Fire Officer advised that some authorities spent less and some more but he was of the view that Essex was not receiving proper return on its investment. He said that he would not have a problem with the funding if the relationship with the FBU was gold plated, slick and brought about speedy decision making. The Chief Fire Officer said that the Authority currently had two aged disputes and that the FBU would not speak to him. He advised Members that he had recently written to the FBU for the fourth time. The Chief Fire Officer said that he felt forced to stop facilities, as over the last five years the investment had not been worth it.

Councillor Barker referred to costs in terms of FTE. T/ACFO Wilson advised that it was not a cashable saving, direct costs were approximately £100-140k for trade union officials. T/ACFO Wilson said that the Service consulted with all trade unions, that the FBU was a representation of the workforce.

Councillor Kent thanked Councillor Knapman for saying that the Authority and the unions should work together. She referred to recommendation 5 of the report, and she asked if an administration charge was made by other authorities. T/ACFO Wilson advised that other authorities did levy a charge and that auditor's had recommended the 3% figure. In response to Councillor Johnson's enquiry T/ACFO Wilson confirmed that 3% would cover costs. Councillor Aspinell enquired why the Authority would not levy a charge of 3% of subscriptions? Officers advised that membership remained steady, it was a fixed cost and represented the resourcing issue.

**Resolved:**

That:

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. The action plan be developed and designed to address the recommendations contained within the audit report.
3. TU facilities should be based the annual equivalent of 1.5 Full Time Employees
4. TU facilities except those related to disciplinary matters are subject to riders.
5. A minimum administration charge of 3% for the maintenance of check-off arrangements, to be reviewed annually, be introduced.

**89. EMERGENCY PLANNING AND ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/112/10 set out the preferred governance arrangements for the ECC and ECFRS Emergency Planning (EP) function.

Councillor Barker said that she was not keen on another committee, and asked why a joint committee was required and where the Authority stood reference its constituents of Southend and Thurrock Councils. The Chief Fire Officer advised that a county council could delegate but not dispense with its legal duty to provide EP. In his view it was important to retain ECC's input, its contribution from various departments e.g. Highways was to be relied upon.

The Chairman said that the project was a model of collaborative working.

Councillor Walters enquired how many district councils wanted to be part of the project; if there had been intimation as to who would chair the committee; and how the committee would be elected. The Chief Fire Officer advised that Southend and Thurrock had their own

emergency planning functions but had entered into discussions about the project; that district councils had not yet received detail of the new model; and that it was for the Authority and ECC to decide who should chair the committee and that both groups would have input. Councillor Walters referred to absorbing staff, he said that the nuts and bolts costs associated with the project needed to be hammered out.

**Resolved:**

That;

1. Delivery of the combined emergency planning/ECFRS project be supported.
2. The project delivery actions were agreed.
3. A further detailed report be brought to the Authority prior to final project 'sign off'.

**90. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The purpose of Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/113/10 was to determine whether the Authority wished to support the winding up of the Regional Management Board (RMB).

The Chairman of the RMB, Councillor Holland, said that the RMB had achieved its purpose and there was now a requirement to focus more on work projects. A replacement East of England Fire Forum was the best way forward. Councillor Holland said she anticipated that she would learn what was happening nationally at the next meeting of the LGA Fire Commission.

**Resolved:**

That;

1. The proposal to wind-up the East of England Regional Management Board with effect from 31 January 2011 be supported.
2. The Chairman and Councillor Ann Holland represent it on the East of England Fire Forum with Councillors Bentley and Pearson as substitutes; and
3. The Authority establish a dedicated reserve with the funds released by the ending of the Regional Management Board and the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to commit funding from this reserve to support future regional projects.

**91. ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES**

The Authority considered report EFA/114/10 by the Chief Fire Officer regarding Members' attendance at conferences and national events.

Councillor Barker said that she was concerned at the level of charge for the member of the Risk Management committee to attend the Risk Management conference. She queried the value for money and said that she was not aware of ever seeing a report back on previous attendance. Councillor Holland, Lead Member Risk Management advised that she had always been told that she had to attend the conference, it included training workshops, she said that it was one of the robust and better conferences and that two Officers attended it. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there was benefit to be gained from the Risk Management conference workshops and training. Councillor Barker said that in her view the cost was too high.

The Chairman assured Members that wherever possible he did not book overnight stays when attending conferences, he referenced the recent BAFSA Sprinkler conference when he

had travelled to Gateshead and back in one day on an economy airline (the cheapest travel option available). The Chairman said that each conference was reviewed on its merits. Referring to the LGA Fire Conference the Chairman said that it was important that the Authority was represented. He was looking for a substitute to attend on his behalf.

**Resolved:**

That;

1. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and group spokesperson (or their substitutes) attend the LGA Fire Conference in 2011.
2. Councillor Holland, as member of the LGA Fire Services Management Committee attend the LGA Fire Conference in 2011.
3. A member of the Risk Management committee attend the Risk Management conference 2011.
4. Authority be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman of Essex Fire Authority, to approve attendance at a conference, seminar or any other activity, on those occasions where it had not been the subject of a specific report to the Authority or one of its committees.

## **92. ESSEX CASUALTY REDUCTION BOARD**

Report EFA/115/10 by the Chief Fire Officer provided a summary of the progress of the Essex Casualty and Congestion Board (ECRB) Reduction Plan between 2007 and 2009.

In response to Councillor Smith-Hughes' enquiry the Chief Fire Officer advised that the pressure to reduce funding was originating from all organisations. He said that it was the Service's intention to continue to participate, but he did not know what other organisations would do. Councillor Smith-Hughes said that the ECRB was very cost effective, that over time it had all been coming together and he suggested a written answer that if organisations really wanted to cut they should make clear what they were doing.

Councillor Riley encouraged all Authorities to look at the ECRB and see that it really worked, he said that it clearly saved money. Councillor Webster said that she was very sorry to see that the ECFR may not continue.

**Resolved:**

That

1. The contents of the report be noted.
2. Due to intense funding pressure the future of the Essex Casualty and Congestion Reduction Board was not guaranteed at this stage.

## **93. ESSEX FIRE MUSEUM – ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received Chief Fire Officer's report EFA/116/10 which provided an annual report of the Essex Fire Museum.

**Resolved:**

That Members noted the contents of the annual report.

## **94. MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (RMB) MEETING**

Chief Fire Officer's report provided Members with the minutes of the Regional Management Board meeting of 13 October 2010.

## **95. REPORT TO CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES**

### **Resolved:**

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

- Medium Term Financial Projections
- ECFRS Transformation – Functional and Departmental Reviews
- Fire Cover Review 2010
- Appraisal Review of the Facilities provided to Trades Union Officials.

## **96. ANY OTHER PART 1 BUSINESS**

### **FBU Correspondence**

Councillor Kent referred to letters received from firefighters voicing their concerns regarding Government spending cuts. She said that it would take her a little while to respond. Councillor Kent said that if a letter was sent to her she would not share the information if she had been asked particularly for it to be kept confidential.

The Chairman said that he had to date received approximately 30 round robin letters, and that from a personal perspective he did not give the same weight to letters written in similar vein. The Chairman said that if individuals made accusations in their letters he was bound to investigate those accusations and would make the name of the complainant known - people should be prepared to stand by what they had said.

The Chief Fire Officer said that three types of correspondence were received: anonymous, an individual expressing a view (which the recipient may not agree with but acknowledged that the sender was entitled to hold the view); and accusations that were a deliberate attempt to be malicious. The Chief Fire Officer said that personnel were expected to maintain standards of behaviour and that he and his team would take reasonable steps to maintain appropriate professional behaviour.

The Chairman advised that his stance in relation to confidentiality was that unless correspondence was marked as "strictly confidential and not to be passed on" it would be forwarded on.

### **Petitions**

The Chief Fire Officer responded to an earlier enquiry from Councillor Barker, "that as a primary authority petitions were not applicable"

Signed .....

Chairman, 9 February 2011

DRAFT