



Essex Fire Authority

Report to the Constituent Authorities of the meetings on 8 and 22 June 2016

The items reported below are the main issues considered by Essex Fire Authority at its annual meeting on 8 June 2016 and an extraordinary meeting on 22 June 2016. Full details of all the matters considered, together with the minutes of the meetings, can be viewed on the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service website, www.essex-fire.gov.uk.

1. Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Authority has elected County Councillor Anthony Hedley as its Chairman and Southend Borough Councillor Ann Holland as its Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

The Authority has also agreed appointments to membership of its committees and other key Member roles, and approved the calendar of meetings for the forthcoming year.

2. Adoption of Revised Code of Member Conduct

The Authority has approved changes to the Code of Conduct for Members, following a review by the Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority Joint Standards Committee. The changes were adopted by Essex County Council on 10 May 2016.

The main changes to the Code relate to the following issues:

- A new provision against 'bringing the office of Councillor into disrepute';
- Simplification of the number of types of interest;
- Extension of the right to grant dispensations;
- Clarification around members' duty to comply with equality law;
- Registration of tenders; and
- Registration of contracts between councillors and a company owned by the Council.

In addition, the Appendix to the Code has been amended to include an updated version of the Nolan Principles, determined nationally by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The Code also now includes a new provision to explain that a breach of the 'Nolan Principles' is not a breach of the Code.

The Authority agreed to adopt the revised version of the Code with effect from 9 June 2016.

3. Essex Fire Authority Strategy 2016 - 2020

The Authority has agreed to support further work on a draft version of a Corporate Strategy for the period 2016 – 2020.

Once finalised, the Strategy's purpose will be to provide a clear direction of travel to support the delivery of changes to Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, the additional investment in Community Safety and the need to change the culture in the Service and develop more trust. These changes were also the subject of consideration by the Authority at its meeting on 8 June, as set out in items 4 and 5 below.

The draft Strategy document had been prepared after seeking comments and views from a range of stakeholders, and its development had been supported by facilitated workshops with senior staff and engagement with a broad cross-section of employees. Following the Authority's expression of support, further work would be undertaken, with the aim of presenting the final version of the Strategy for approval by Members later in 2016.

4. Integrated Risk Management Plan

The Authority has agreed the adoption and publication of an Integrated Risk Management Plan covering the period 2016-2020.

The Government expects all Fire and Rescue Authorities to have in place an Integrated Risk Management Plan, setting out the assessment of local risks to life and how effectively resources are used in response to those risks, at the same time providing value for money to the local taxpayer.

Development of the Plan was informed by two 12-week consultations to obtain the views and opinions of the public of Essex, partners, stakeholders and employees on the role of the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex. The first consultation focussed on the principles and standards for the Service. From this, the second consultation proposed options to reflect a refreshed delivery model which aims to put greater emphasis on prevention work helping people avoid having fires and other emergencies, further reducing the demand on response services, whilst still providing an effective and professional response service.

The Plan includes an action plan to manage the changes to service provision identified by the Authority through the planning process, and sets out how the Authority will give the community a Fire and Rescue Service that best meets their needs in a financially sustainable way. The Plan also outlines the changes the Service plans to make in order to manage both existing and emerging risk more effectively.

5. 2020 Programme – Consultation Outcomes and Options for Change

The Authority has received the results of its extensive consultation and engagement exercise 'Options for Change 2016 – 2020' and, based upon the

outcome, agreed proposals for changes to the number and crewing of fire engines across Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

Programme 2020 was established in February 2015 to plan the work for the Fire and Rescue Service in Essex to become service-led, community-focussed, values driven and financially sustainable. As part of this work, the Authority undertook two significant consultation exercises, the first of which looked at principles and standards, with the second consultation seeking views on three specific service options. The resultant proposals for change related to changes to the operational response model, but also incorporated broader changes to the delivery of Prevention and Protection services and to support and enabling functions.

Having given very thorough and detailed consideration to the proposals and the response to the consultation, the Authority has supported the second of the three proposed options for changes to the operational response model, as summarised below:

'Option 2

Under this option the Service will have 66 fire engines, 18 of which are wholetime and 48 are on call. Specifically, the proposal seeks:

1. to remove the second fire engine from the following fire stations:
 - Orsett fire station
 - Rayleigh Weir fire station
 - Loughton fire station
 - Corringham fire station
 - Frinton fire station
2. to change the crewing of the second fire engine at Clacton fire station from wholetime to on-call
3. to change the crewing system at the following fire stations from day-crewing to on-call:
 - Dovercourt fire station
 - South Woodham Ferrers fire station
 - Great Baddow fire station
 - Waltham Abbey fire station
 - Great Dunmow fire station
4. to remove the Pinzgauer fire engines from the following fire stations:
 - Manningtree fire station
 - Burnham-on-Crouch fire station
 - Billericay fire station
5. to replace the Pinzgauer fire engine at Great Dunmow with a conventional fire engine.'

In selecting this option, the Authority noted:

- it had received the support of 73% of respondents to the consultation, and support from 68% of respondents who are Essex County Fire and Rescue Service employees;
- it would allow the Authority to increase its collaboration work and respond to additional emergency incidents; and
- it would require a reduction of 130 wholetime firefighters, achievable by the end of 2019/2020 through natural wastage.

The Authority has expressed support for the following general principles for delivery of the option for change:

- a. that staff affected and their representatives will be engaged in the process for managing the change;
- b. that the potential for compulsory redundancies should be avoided or minimised wherever possible;
- c. that wherever possible the role of firefighters should be broadened to include a wider range of Prevention and Protection activities and the ability to respond to emergency and non-emergency incidents on behalf of other agencies; and
- d. that the Service will endeavour to ensure that the wellbeing of employees is taken into account at all stages of the process.

Finally, the Authority has delegated responsibility to the Acting Chief Fire Officer for taking the necessary actions to deliver the option selected, and to bring forward an implementation plan to its next meeting on 7 September 2016.

6. Progress Report on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

The Authority has continued to receive regular progress updates on work to implement the recommendations arising from the Independent Cultural Review. These have included reports by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel.

7. Appointment of Director of Prevention, Protection and Response

Following a selection process, the Authority has approved the appointment of David Bill to the post of Director of Prevention, Protection and Response. The post was designed as part of a recent review of the Senior Management structure of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

**Councillor Anthony Hedley
Chairman**