

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY - MINUTES

Date: Thursday 13 December 2007

Time: 14:30 – 15:00

Place: Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, Hinchingsbrooke Cottage,
Brampton Road, Huntingdon

Present: Cambridgeshire County Council
Councillors: B Boddington, R Butcher, C Carter, S Giles,
D Harty, L W McGuire, L Oliver, R Pegram, M Smith, H Williams

Peterborough City Council
Councillors: M Collins, J Goodwin, G Murphy, D Raines,

Officers

Present: L Booth, M Brown, H Buzzell, G Stagg, C Strickland, G Taylor and M Warren.

40. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors G Harper, S Kindersley and R Moss – Eccardt.

41. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2007

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 18 October 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman recorded the Fire Authority's thanks and best wishes to Martin Scott, Director of Resources, who was retiring from the Service in February 2008. The Chairman and members congratulated Matthew Warren on his appointment to the post of Director of Resources.

The Chairman also reported that Neil Newberry had joined the Service from Hertfordshire as the new Area Manager.

Members noted that the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue had won a commendation that recognised outstanding service delivery by local authorities. The Service had worked jointly with district councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to compare the existing property gazetteer with the National Land and Property Gazetteer, the preferred source of addressing information for the FireControl project. The Chairman congratulated all involved.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests under the Code of Conduct in the item on the Environmental Strategy and Action Plan:

- Councillor L Oliver arising from her membership of the Regional Environment and Resources Panel
- Councillor G Murphy arising from his position as Portfolio holder for the Environment at Peterborough City Council.

44. REVENUE AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES 2008/09

The Authority received a report and Budget booklet on the Authority's draft 2008/09 revenue and capital estimates, including precept and indicative Council Tax calculations.

Members noted:

- the Authority set a Band D Council Tax of £52.38 for 2007/08, a 4% increase over the rate set in 2006/07.
- the Government expectation that local authorities do not set excessive increases in 2008/09 and an assumption that Council tax increases would be capped at 5%.
- the provisional Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority was set at £13.335m for 2008/09, which represented an increase of 7.2% over the adjusted 2007/08 grant of £12.444m.
- as part of the 3 year grant settlement, increases in grant of 4.3% and 3.9% were expected in 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- the anticipated cost of inflation between 2007/08 and 2008/09 was £659K, an average of 2.5%
- details of cost pressures on the Authority's budget of £987K
- estimated efficiency savings of £113K in 2008/09 through lower insurance premiums, implementation of a standard fleet of vehicles, improved procurement and efficiencies from partnership working.
- a proposed capital budget for 2008/09 of £3.654m
- every 1% increase in Council tax resulted in an additional £139k being received in revenue.

The Authority discussed the range of Council Tax increases on which to consult the local community having regard to the immediate and longer term financial pressures on the Authority, projected income, and the financial impact on Council taxpayers.

The Authority supported the proposals for consultation on the proposed Budget and Precept for 2008/09 through a press release, information on the website and direct consultation with relevant bodies, parish councils and businesses.

The Authority agreed the draft revenue and capital budget estimates and that consultation on the Authority's Budget for 2008/09 be based on Council Tax increase options of 3.5%, 4%, and 4.5%.

45 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report on a proposed Environmental Strategy and associated action plan which were being recommended to the Authority by the Community Safety and Policy and Finance Committees.

The objectives of the Strategy were:

- implement policies through a co-ordinated Environmental Management System (EMS);
- assess the environmental impact of all historic, current and likely future operations;
- set environmental targets and goals designed to improve our environmental performance;
- use environmentally safe, efficient and sustainable energy sources to meet our needs;
- minimise any environmental impact of our service delivery at operational incidents;
- minimise waste, especially hazardous waste, and whenever possible recycle materials and dispose of all waste through safe and responsible methods;
- continue to reduce energy consumption and incorporate long term strategies for energy efficiency into planning and development;
- through coordinating route planning and operational delivery seek to realise the dual benefits of reduced fuel consumption and lower exhaust emissions;
- seek to minimise the environmental impact of its purchases/procurement through the adherence to environmental and sustainability purchasing guidance;
- ensure that all suppliers and contractors have similar environmental standards; and,
- raise awareness within the organisation and encourage participation at all levels through training, communications and a constant reappraisal of working methods and techniques.

Members:

- Noted that members had suggested the inclusion of more challenging and aspirational targets within the action plan. Members were advised that this was the first such Strategy and action plan and that future Strategies would evolve and include further actions.
- Proposed that the action relating to building standards be reworded to refer to future construction being "...undertaken in accordance with the highest **possible** BREEAM ratings...". Members were advised of the significant cost implications of building to the highest BREEAM standards

and that the standard achieved should have regard to the relative costs and benefits and affordability.

- Expressed concerns about the apparently long timescales for some of the actions and that the use of “timescale” as a heading was unclear. Members noted that a project manager had been appointed to monitor the delivery of the action plan and this would involve an assessment of actions required to implement the plan and the development of implementation dates. Some of the tasks (e.g. the regrooving of tyres) although apparently straightforward needed to be risk assessed taking account of the particular demands placed on Service vehicles.
- Suggested that an annual awards event include the presentation of awards to staff for suggestions for environmental initiatives. and that Sharp End News could also include a separate section on the environment.
- Noted that reports monitoring the implementation of the action plan would be submitted to the Community Safety Committee.

The Fire Authority agreed that the Environmental Strategy and Action Plan be approved.

46. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

The Fire Authority approved the following changes in appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies:

- Councillor L W McGuire replace Councillor G Murphy as a member of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee.

47. REPORT OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – 22 NOVEMBER 2007

Members received a report on the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on the 22 November 2007 which included information reports on:

- Medium Term Fire Authority Plan
- Revenue and Capital Budget monitoring 2007/08
- East of England Regional Management Board Minutes.

Members noted:

- that underspending on the revenue budget for 2007/08 was expected to reduce at year end.
- the Authority would take insurance from the new Insurance Mutual from 1 April 2008 and that savings arising of £70k had been included in the draft budget for 2008/09. Members noted that there had been no claims to the Insurance Mutual since September 2007 when it started providing cover to some of the member authorities.

- the Authority received income from the provision of lines to the Fire Control for automatic fire alarms and that the timing of the receipt of payments had resulted in the apparent increase in income over that budgeted.

48. REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE – 31 OCTOBER 2007

Members received a report on the meeting of the Community Safety Committee held on 31 October 2007 which included an information report on the draft Service Improvement Plan (SIP) 2008/09 which had been issued for consultation. Members noted that as a consequence of the poor response received previously to the consultation on the Service Improvement Plan 2007/08, a different approach was proposed for the SIP 2008/09 with staff being engaged at an earlier stage on the content and scope of the proposed reviews. Revised consultations arrangements would also be used.

Members referred to delays experienced by some retained duty staff in traveling to Fire Stations for emergency call-outs due to traffic congestion and suggested that the special signage on vehicles used by such staff be reintroduced. The Chief Fire Officer advised that such staff were not exempt from the requirements of traffic regulations. The Fire Authority agreed that a report be made to the Community Safety Committee in April 2008 on the extent of the problem and the issues involved.

CHAIRMAN