

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY**Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters at 10.30 hours on Thursday 10 September 2009.**

Members present: Councillors Carden, Fawthrop, Freebody, Harmer-Strange, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Kemble (Chairman), Livings, Marsh, Ost, Pidgeon, Rufus, Scott and Sparks.

1. DRAFT 2010/11 SERVICE PLANNING STRATEGY APPROACHES

- 1.1 The Fire Authority considered a report that sought support for the development of the draft 2010/11 Service Planning and Resource management preparations over the coming months. The report provided an update of the latest position, before the detailed service planning processes commence their annual cycle over the period September to February. The overall aim was to continue to achieve agreed service priorities, deliver the required annual efficiency savings, ensure preparedness for likely reductions in Formula Grant in 2011/12 and beyond, as well as continuing to deliver quality services at a price local council taxpayers are prepared to pay.
- 1.2 Current modelling based on a 'worst case' scenario indicated that savings of £311,000 in 2010/11, £926,000 in 2011/12 and £706,000 in 2012/13 might be required to achieve Council Tax B and D increases of 3.5% and keep below the current 5% capping limit. This assumed no change to Formula Grant currently advised for 2010/11 and a reduction in Formula Grant over the period 2011/12 – 2013/14 of 10% in cash terms.
- 1.3 Members noted the context within which the draft 2010/11 Service Planning and Resource Management preparations must take place over the forthcoming months.

2. 2008/09 PERFORMANCE OUTCOME REPORT

- 2.1 The Fire Authority considered a report that summarised the 2008/09 performance outcomes. The report provided performance outcomes for successes within the organisation, continued development work taking place within community safety, technical fire safety, equality and diversity and health and safety. A summary of 2008/09 performance indicator results, Improvement Planning achievements, partnership performance and an analysis of Incidents by Station and Type was also provided, as well as the detailed performance indicator information for 2008/09. The indicators were also compared with those of previous years, and with the latest figures for the top 25% of Fire & Rescue Services and family group averages.
- 2.2 The report highlighted an overall performance improvement and also demonstrated that the Fire Authority is continuing to build upon investments and achievements made in previous years. In its Performance Assessment Statements for 2006/07, the Audit Commission identified that 86% of the performance indicators for the Fire Authority have improved since 2003/04 making it the sixth most improved authority nationally. For 2007/08, 53% of the BVPI improvement targets were achieved. In 2008/09, 63% had met their improvement targets, with 20% of the remaining indicators being within 10% of the target and only 17% not meeting the targets compared to 25% that didn't meet them last year.

- 2.3 The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive stressed the need to brand and market the work of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service so as to increase the public and other local authorities' awareness of the different roles undertaken.
- 2.4 Members noted the 2008/09 performance results.
3. **FURTHER AMENDMENT TO FIRE AUTHORITY TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2009/10**
- 3.1 The Fire Authority considered a report that sought approval to a further amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy Statement for 2009/10 that provided for increased flexibility.
- 3.2 It was now considered reasonable to include all UK Institutions eligible for Government Credit Guarantee Scheme (GCGS) which met the Fire Authorities required credit rating for 2 out of 3 of the ratings agencies. This would bring Nationwide, Lloyds/HBOS and NatWest/RBS onto the approved list. Standard Chartered Bank was also eligible for the GCGS but fell below rating criteria on both Fitch and Standards & Poors ratings, so would still remain outside of the approved list of counterparties. It was now considered appropriate to increase the total maximum investment in these institutions from £8m to £11m (with the maximum period of any deal remaining unchanged at 3 months). Any amount over £11m will be invested with the Debt Management and Deposit Facility.
- 3.3 Councillor Sparks expressed concerns that it was too early to expand the list of counterparties as proposed but did support the proposed increase in the total maximum investments to £11m. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive supported the professional advice given by the Treasurer and felt that the Authority continued to maintain a prudent approach to Treasury Management.
- 3.4 Members approved the amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy Statement for 2009/10, although Councillor Sparks wished it to be recorded that he voted against the proposal.

COUNCILLOR TED KEMBLE
CHAIRMAN OF EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY
10 September 2009