



MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE held on Thursday 8th October 2015 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.00am.

PRESENT: Councillors J Joyce (Chair), M Biggin, P Carey, S Parker, B Rudd and J Weatherill.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor T Sherlock as Member Champion for Procurement

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A RECORDING OF MEETING

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P Booher, D Flude and S Nelson.

C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Members interests.

D MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 19 August 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION – ENABLING CLOSER WORKING BETWEEN THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced this report which provided Members with the opportunity to agree the Authority's response to the consultation entitled 'Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services (the consultation)'. He confirmed that Members had agreed at the Fire Authority meeting on the 23rd September that Policy Committee should agree the response to the consultation.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised Members that officers had drafted a suggested response to the consultation which was attached as Appendix 3 to the report for their consideration. He explained that officers had consulted with the office of the PCC for Cheshire and Chief Constable and that even though separate responses to the consultation would be submitted it had been suggested that a joint statement, which was attached as Appendix 4 to the report, be sent with the Authority's response. He confirmed that the

statement had been drafted in conjunction with the PCC for Cheshire and the Chief Constable (and approved by the Chair).

He explained that he had also circulated to Members at the meeting a copy of the response to the consultation by John Dwyer, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, for their information.

The Chair suggested that Members considered each question and the draft response as it was important that Members views were represented within the final response to the consultation. Members agreed that the response needed to reflect the best possible position for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Authority whilst taking into account the Blue Light Collaboration project work that was already underway.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred Members to Appendix 3 of the report which provided suggested responses to each of the questions within the consultation and Members discussed each response and made the following observations:

- i) that the existing joint working carried out between the blue light services (e.g. shared sites at Poynton and Birchwood and the co-responders based at Nantwich Fire Station) be referred to within the response as examples to re-inforce the positive collaboration that was already taking place.
- ii) Members discussed the reference to a single employer within question 4 and felt that the response should refer to the differences between a fire and rescue service (primarily prevention) and the police (primarily enforcement) and need to maintain strong distinct identities and reputations.
- iii) Members felt that there should continue to be separate Chiefs for police and fire and rescue services. They could not support the removal of either role. These views should replace the wording in the draft response.
- iv) Members did not believe that the Police and Crime Panel should have its remit extended to scrutinise decision making in relation to fire and rescue services if a PCC took responsibility for them. Therefore the answer to question 7 should be amended to 'No'.
- v) Members were not convinced that having a PCC as a member of a fire authority was necessary. They were also mindful of the response made by the PCC for Cheshire and were happy to incorporate the tenor of part of his response to question 10, i.e. the reference to the potential for blurring of responsibility. Members also commented on the local arrangements in Cheshire with the Blue Light Executive Board which they felt provided the wider governance required. They wished the local arrangements to be highlighted within the response.
- vi) Members suggested that the response in relation to resilience should refer to the need for close joint working across the emergency services. They did not feel that this was necessarily achieved by changes to

structures. The response to question 13 should be amended to reflect this view.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services concluded by referring Members to question 15 and suggested that this would be an appropriate section for the Authority to refer to the joint statement with the PCC for Cheshire and Chief Constable, which was provided for Members to review as Appendix 4 to the report. He suggested that another document could also be included within the response that provided the further contextual information mentioned by Members.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that he would make the required changes to the response to the consultation and would circulate a final document for approval by the Chair on behalf of the Authority prior to its submission to the Government.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the draft response to the consultation – Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services be agreed subject to the changes and additions, requested by Members, being suitably incorporated by officers (and subject to final approval by the Chair of the Authority).

3 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business listed below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraph indicated:

Paragraph

(3) Information relating to the financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

4 CONSTRUCTION OF POWEY LANE FIRE STATION

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) introduced the report which provided information about the outcomes from the detailed pre-construction work that had been carried out by the Authority's agents and ISG Construction Limited (ISG). Members' approval was sought to enter into a design and build contract with ISG and complete any associated documentation in relation to the construction of a new fire station at Powey Lane, Mollington.

The ACFO provided Members with a visual overview of the site and explained the pre-construction process that had taken place with the Authority's contractor partner and the activities involved within the process.

The Head of Finance provided a summary of the financial implications and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services commented briefly on the legal implications.

Members discussed the details contained in the report and were satisfied with the recommendations proposed.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted; and

[2] officers be authorised to enter into a design and build contract with ISG Construction Limited and complete any associated documentation for the construction of a new fire station at Powey Lane, Mollington.