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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP  
AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL 2016 AT 7.30PM IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

**Present:** Councillors Miles (Chairman), Baker (Vice-Chairman), Bennison, I J Henderson and Yallop

**Also Present:** Councillor McWilliams (Well-being and Partnerships Portfolio Holder), Councillor Turner (Coastal Protection Portfolio Holder), Councillor M Brown, Councillor Bucke, Councillor Calver and Councillor Fairley

**In Attendance:** Management and Members' Support Manager (Karen Neath) and Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice)

**Also in Attendance:** Human Resources and Business Manager (Anastasia Simpson), Essex Fire and Rescue Service – Senior Divisional Officer (Paul Bowers) and Finance Director and Treasurer (Mike Clayton)

**24. WELCOME**

The Chairman of the Committee extended a warm welcome to the two Essex Fire and Rescue Officers and others who were present at the meeting.

**25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

An apology was received from Councillor Poonian.

**26. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the special meeting of the Committee, held on 22 February 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman announced that Councillor Ivan Henderson had sought and had been granted a Dispensation by the Monitoring Officer to remain in the meeting for the Fire Authority item, (agenda item no. 4) by virtue of the fact that he had an interest in that he is both a member of Essex County Council and a Fire Authority Member for which he receives a Members' Allowance.

**28. PRESENTATION BY THE ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Councillor I Henderson announced that he had sought and received a Dispensation from the Monitoring Officer to take part in this item on the agenda.

Mr Clayton, the Finance Director and Treasurer for the Essex Fire and Essex Service introduced the draft Consultation Document for the Essex Fire Authority which gave options for change for 2016 – 2020 and said that in June 2016 the Fire Authority will have to make decisions that provided that the Service remained fit for purpose and reflected the risks that the communities of Essex faced. He added that this was Part 2 of a 2-stage consultation process.

Mr Clayton informed the Committee that whilst the population of Essex was still growing (7%) and traffic also increasing (9%), there had been a 45% reduction in all incidents across the county which had covered a 10-year period. He added that the reduction in incidents was still falling and reflected the national trend of 42% in England. Mr Clayton showed a

graph which showed the average fire engine demand, the maximum fire engine demand and the average fire engine availability which was considerably higher than the maximum demand.

Mr Clayton said that the first Fire Service consultation had concentrated on safety and figures showed that 12% of households did not have a fire alarm which was crucial in the case of fire. In house fire deaths 40% of those did not have a smoke alarm which showed death was more likely without a fire/smoke alarm.

He said that the proposals in the first consultation document had received overwhelming support and were adopted, it was necessary to cover education by educating in every school in Essex, however the Fire Service could only get into 75% of Essex schools. He added that the Fire Service had a target of fire alarms in 100% of all households.

Mr Clayton then informed the Committee that the Fire Service had new response standards which were measured from the time of the call to them, these were two standards, the first being able to attend 90% of calls within 15 minutes with the second being an average of 10 minutes to a life threatening incident. He said that by looking at the first consultation, there was a focus on rebalancing operational resources rather than increasing Council Tax and the new draft consultation gave different options for people to consider.

The Senior Divisional Officer (Paul Bowers) talked about the three options available and types of changes that were available, these broadly fell into four categories, options to close fire stations, reduce the number of fire engines, reduce the number of firefighters and change fire engines to on-call crewing. He said that they had done a detailed analysis to identify options for change that maintained the effective set-up of fire stations and fire engines.

Mr Bower gave details of the various options at different fire stations and how the Fire Service would manage organisational change. He said that all of the three options would mean fewer fire service personnel, however the service was committed to minimising potential redundancies and would try to ensure that their employees' well-being was taken into account at all stages of the change process. He detailed the steps that would be taken to prevent compulsory redundancies so that these would only occur where it was unavoidable.

Mr Bowers gave details of the three options open to the Fire Service which were:

#### Option 1

- Change from 2 fire engines to one fire engine at Orsett, Rayleigh Weir, Loughton, Southend, Grays, Corringham and Frinton;
- Change the crewing of the second fire engine from wholetime to on-call at Clacton and Harlow Central;
- Remove the Pinzgauer appliances from Manningtree, Billericay and Burnham on Crouch;
- Replace the Pinzgauer at Great Dunmow with a fire engine; and
- Change the crewing system to on-call at Dovercourt, South Woodham Ferrers, Great Baddow, Waltham Abbey and Great Dunmow.

#### Option 2

- Change from 2 fire engines to one fire engine at Orsett, Rayleigh Weir, Loughton, Frinton and Corringham;
- Change the crewing of one wholetime fire engine at Clacton to on-call;
- Remove the Pinzgauer appliances from Manningtree, Billericay and Burnham on Crouch;
- Replace the Pinzgauer at Great Dunmow with a fire engine; and

- Change the crewing system to on-call at Dovercourt, South Woodham Ferrers, Great Baddow, Waltham Abbey and Great Dunmow.

### Option 3

- Change from 2 fire engines to one fire engine at Orsett, Rayleigh Weir, Loughton, Southend, Grays, Harlow Central and Clacton;
- Change the crewing of the second fire engine from wholetime fire engine to on-call at Brentwood;
- Remove the Pinzgauer appliances from Manningtree, Billericay and Burnham on Crouch;
- Replace the Pinzgauer at Great Dunmow with a fire engine; and
- Change the crewing system to on-call at Dovercourt, South Woodham Ferrers, Great Baddow, Waltham Abbey and Great Dunmow.

Mr Bowers summarised the three options and explained how the various options would impact on the different fire stations and commented that Option 3 had the biggest savings of £10 million which would mean no increase in Council Tax, Option 2 would save £6.4 million from the operational response budget and if £3 million was to be invested in prevention, Council Tax would need to rise by 2% a year. Option 1 would save £8.6 million from the operational response budget and again, to invest £3 million in prevention, Council Tax would need to rise by about 0.8% per year, about 55p on a Band D property.

Mr Clayton then explained to the Committee about the Local Government Funding Settlement and how the Fire Service would be losing half of revenue support grant over the period 2016-2020 and how this would impact on the three options that had been looked at.

Mr Bowers then gave the Committee details of the consultation process which was running from 1 February to 25 April 2016 and was welcoming comments and views from all consultees.

The Chair took questions both from the Committee and from the audience. Discussion was had on the following points:-

- Where in the press the consultation was advertised - Mr Bowers said the advertisements had been in the Echo and Gazette series of newspapers;
- Whether additional roadshows could be added – Mr Bowers agreed to look at extra locations for the roadshows, however he did advise Members that there were no guarantees extra locations could be added;
- With particular reference to Dovercourt Fire Station, the arrangements for on-call fire fighters and the impact on the availability of both fire engines – Mr Bowers responded that for a standard house fire it would still be possible to send two fire appliances to assist and Mr Clayton added the Fire Service were looking at the possibility of off-road provision but was not sure at this time where these could be based;
- Whether savings had also been considered from support staff and assets – Mr Clayton said there had been reductions of support in some areas and that £2 million of savings had been included;
- Access to schools to undertake engagement with young children - Mr Bowers said that they had already worked with 75% of primary schools in Essex and that although they had a target of attending 100% of primary schools, it depended on each individual school's Head Teacher whether a visit from the fire service could be fitted into their programme;
- The impact on the consultation options of new house building – Mr Bowers responded by saying that this had been taken into consideration through strategic assessment risks and he pointed out that new houses were built to higher safety standards, also extra revenue would be received by extra Council Tax from new housing;

- What particular consideration has been given to emergency fire coverage in rural areas – Mr Clayton said that a project was currently being undertaken to look at rural/parish safety across Essex jointly with the Police to ensure that communities were able to help themselves and work with volunteers on fire prevention safety; and
- Cross working with other emergency services – again the Fire Service were already looking at working with the other Emergency Services.

After discussion and questions it was **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet: that

- (a) the Council work with Essex Fire Service to facilitate access to a small number of local schools the Fire Service have not currently accessed to allow them to undertake preventative work with school children;
- (b) The Council is not convinced that sufficient evidence has been provided that any of the three options would provide adequate cover in some parts of Tendring and that none of the options could be supported until it can be proven that the necessary recruitment for on-call coverage can take place; and
- (c) the Council embrace and support the ethos of all emergency services exploring working together..

The Chairman thanked both Mr Bowers and Mr Clayton for their comprehensive and interesting presentation.

## **29. REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2015/16 AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17**

The Chairman reminded the Committee that it was agreed at Council on 5 April 2016 that the Education and Skills Committee would be merged with the Community Leadership and Partnership Committee which would mean an increase of Committee members to 11.

The Committee discussed the items on the draft Work Plan and Members commented on meetings that were cancelled when there was not enough business to be discussed then extra meetings were added when new items needed to be discussed.

It was also requested that a meeting be held with the three Rail new franchise bidders so that the Committee could discuss the franchise bid with the three companies. However the Committee was reminded that the new Franchise would be awarded in 2016 and that the Committee Officers would contact the bidders to see if a special meeting, possibly a half day, could be arranged.

## **30. FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee reviewed, and noted, the new items relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee, contained in the Forward Plan 174, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.04 p.m.

Chairman