

ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service



Minutes of a Meeting of the Cultural Review Sub-Group of the Principal Officers Human Resources Committee held on Thursday 10 December 2015 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillor A Holland	Chairman
Councillor B Aspinell	
Councillor C Guglielmi	
Councillor C Kent	

The following Officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Adam Eckley	Acting Chief Fire Officer
Lindsey Stafford-Scott	Director of HR and Organisational Development
Shirley Jarlett	Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer to Essex Fire Authority
Judith Dignum	Secretary to the Committee

Councillor A Bayley was also present as an observer.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Erskine.

Shirley Jarlett, Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer, in the Chair

1. Election of Chairman

Upon the motion of Councillor Guglielmi, seconded by Councillor Aspinell, it was

Resolved:

The Councillor A Holland be elected Chairman of the Sub-Group for remainder of the current Municipal Year.

Councillor A Holland in the Chair

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded Members that they should declare any interests at this point or during consideration of the appropriate agenda item.

3. Membership and Terms of Reference

The Sub-Group's membership and terms of reference were noted.

4. Proposed governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme

The Sub-Group considered report EFA/109/15 by the Acting Chief Fire Officer which set out the proposed governance arrangements to be adopted for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme. The Sub-Group's approval was sought for the proposed governance model and the associated supporting Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel.

The following points arose from consideration of the report:

- It was noted that Appendix B represented a summary of everything that had been agreed to date regarding the role of the Expert Advisory Panel. As such, it would act as a useful source of reference for a variety of audiences. The existence of clear boundaries between the Panel, the Fire Authority and the management of ECFRS were highlighted.
- Clarification was provided with regard to the scrutiny role to be fulfilled by the Expert Advisory Panel, and the role of Sir Ken Knight in terms of overall scrutiny of the Panel's work.
- Work was due to commence with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority, together with the Group Spokespersons, to develop and agree a programme of training and development for Authority members.
- It was agreed that the list of those to be invited to formal meetings of the Expert Advisory Panel should remain as set out in Appendix B to the report (ie the membership should not be extended to include Councillor Guglielmi).
- It was noted that the minutes of the Sub-Group would be submitted to meetings of the Principal Officers Human Resources Committee and Essex Fire Authority.
- In noting progress towards the secondment of a Member Services Officer from one of the city, district and borough councils in Essex, the Sub-Group expressed a preference for the role to be undertaken by a single, named individual. The person concerned would be responsible for ensuring that all members of the Authority were kept up-to-date with regard to the Expert Advisory Panel's work, and progress on implementing the Cultural Review recommendations in general.
- There was a detailed discussion concerning the challenges associated with implementing cultural change, and various actions planned to help achieve it. It was acknowledged that staff needed to see evidence of change to allow them to have confidence in an organisation's commitment to it.

Resolved:

1. That the three-dimensional model set out at Appendix A to report EFA/109/15 be adopted as the governance arrangements for the Expert Advisory Panel supporting Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's culture change programme.

2. That the Terms of Reference for the Expert Advisory Panel, as set out in Appendix B to report EFA/109/15 and which support the governance arrangements adopted in Resolution 1 above, be agreed.

5. Progress report on the Cultural Review

The Sub-Group received report EFA/110/15 by the Acting Chief Fire Officer which provided a progress update on the delivery of the work programme required to improve the culture within ECFRS. The report was submitted in support of the decisions taken by Essex Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 October 2015. A progress report by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel was attached as Appendix A.

It was noted that the next opportunity for Members to meet Steve McGuirk (Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel) in person would be at the planned Authority workshop on 18 December. Subsequently, meetings would take place on a monthly basis.

The report, together with the progress report provided by the Chairman of the Expert Advisory Panel, attached as Appendix A, was **noted**.

6. Progress Report on the Management Review

The Sub-Group received a verbal update by the Acting Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development on the proposed review of the Service's management.

In presenting the update, the Acting Chief Fire Officer advised that the design principles underpinning the review at all levels of the organisation had now been agreed. The structures for SMB and SDB had been agreed in principle, with discussions due to take place shortly with those directly affected, and a report seeking Members' agreement would be submitted to the Authority's meeting on 13 January 2016. Once the review of the top tiers had been completed, it was planned to review the remaining tiers over the next 12 – 24 months.

Members noted that the review would focus on the structure needed to deliver the Service's strategic aims.

The progress update was **noted**.

7. Independent Cultural Review Action Plan

The Sub-Group received the latest version of the Action Plan formulated to address each of the thirty five recommendations arising from the Cultural Review, which was circulated at the meeting. It was noted that the Plan was now due to be widely shared, and would be included on the agenda for the Fire Authority Meeting on 13 January 2016.

In introducing the Plan the Acting Chief Fire Officer advised that Recommendation 4 had been omitted due to the confidential nature of issues relating to the Chief Fire Officer.

Members received detailed commentary on the actions under each recommendation and gave them thorough consideration, noting progress where applicable. In relation to Action 1(6), the Sub-Group requested that particular efforts be made to ensure that the Fire Minister received regular progress updates.

The Action Plan, together with the progress made with regard to implementation, was **noted**.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

It was noted that future meetings of the Sub-Group would take place at 10.00am on the following dates:

- Thursday 7 January 2016
- Wednesday 10 February 2016
- Thursday 10 March 2016
- Tuesday 5 April 2016

The meeting closed at 12.05pm.

Signed.....

Chairman
7 January 2016