



Essex Fire Authority

Report to the Constituent Authorities of the meetings on 14 and 28 June 2017

The items reported below are the main issues considered by Essex Fire Authority at its meetings on 25 April, 14 June and 28 June 2017. Full details of all the matters considered, together with the minutes of the meetings, can be viewed on the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service website, www.essex-fire.gov.uk.

1. Chief Fire Officer

Following a robust process in compliance with the law in relation to statutory officers, the Authority has agreed to dismiss the Chief Fire Officer, Mr David Johnson, on grounds of gross misconduct with effect from 25 April 2017. As it relates to the personal circumstances of the former Chief Fire Officer, it is not possible to provide any further information about this issue.

2. Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Authority has elected County Councillor Anthony Hedley as its Chairman and Southend Borough Councillor Ann Holland as its Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2017/18.

3. Membership of the Authority

The Authority has welcomed a number of new members appointed by the Constituent Authorities, in particular following the Essex County Council elections in May 2017 and in the light of a by-election and other political changes at Southend Borough Council.

The political make-up of the Authority is now as set out below:

Group	Members
Conservative	18
Labour	2
Liberal Democrat	2
Non-aligned	3
Total	25

The Authority has also agreed appointments to membership of its committees and other key Member roles, and approved the calendar of meetings for the forthcoming year.

4. Annual Performance Report

The Authority received a report and presentation providing them with an overview of the Service's performance over the financial year 2016-2017.

Members noted the performance and commentary against the targets established for the Service for 2016-17. The outcome headlines highlighted that there had been a 13% increase in attendance at incidents. All three incident classifications of Fire, Special Services and False Alarms, had seen an increase in the period 2016/17 over the previous reporting year. Members noted the performance against targets in the areas of prevention, protection, response, people and leadership and public value and collaboration.

Members raised a number of concerns with regard to appliance availability, particularly relating to stations which were moving to on-call under the 2020 programme and where there had been issues with the recruitment and retention of on-call fire-fighters. There were also concerns raised regarding the future direction of the service with regard to any outcomes that may come out of the Grenfell Tower Fire inquiry.

Members requested more detailed information on a number of targets and it was agreed that a revised report would be considered by the Audit, Governance and Review Committee which would set performance targets for 2017-18. The more detailed report and performance targets for 2017-2018 would be considered by the Authority at its next meeting on 6 September 2017. The Finance Director and Treasurer also undertook to meet with Cllr Henderson outside of the meeting to review the figures for the number of leavers and joiners relating to on-call recruitment.

5. Staff Survey Outputs

The Authority has received a presentation on the results of the annual Make Some Noise Employee Engagement Survey carried out in March 2017, the third such survey to be conducted.

Members noted that 582 employees completed the survey which equated to 42% of the workforce, a one point increase on 2016.

The overall engagement score was 68%, calculated based on the results of questions relating to pride, endeavour, advocacy and care. This was a five point increase on the result in 2016.

The Authority received information on the survey results, which had been analysed by People Insight (the independent survey provider). The presentation outlined the top 10 results, the questions with the most positive responses, the greatest improvements since 2016 and the greatest declines since 2016.

Members noted that there was a variation in results based on length of service, with those responders who had been at Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

over 10 years having a lower overall engagement score and fewer of them feeling that follow up action would be taken following the survey results.

Members noted the analysis regarding focussing improvement on the key drivers of engagement. Some of the comments made regarding the best things about working for the service were highlighted, along with some comments on the one thing responders would change about the service.

The Authority noted the potential action areas highlighted which included celebrating and maintaining the improvement in engagement, prioritising the pace of change and management effectiveness and leadership and investigating why people believe that action has not been taken since the last survey.

Members considered that there was still work to do regarding improving the number of responders to the survey, on engagement and relating to diversity and inclusion.

**Councillor Anthony Hedley
Chairman**