



BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

REPORT OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY FROM ITS MEETING ON 10 FEBRUARY 2011 TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MEETINGS

Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority (CFA) held a meeting on 10 February 2011 at Dunstable Community Fire Station. The major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below:

1. COMMUNICATIONS

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Robert Hull

The Chair paid tribute to ACFO Hull at his final Combined Fire Authority meeting before he retired later in the month.

2. FIRECONTROL PROJECT AND FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

On 20 December 2010 the Fire Minister, Bob Neil MP, had made a written statement to Parliament announcing that the main FiReControl contract had been terminated and the project would close down with immediate effect.

DCLG had published a consultation document 'The Future of Fire and Rescue Control Services in England', with a twelve week consultation period running from 13 January until 8 April 2011, inviting views from the fire and rescue sector on whether resilience, technology and efficiency were the right priorities to shape control services in the future, and asking what lessons could be learnt from FiReControl.

In 2010 officers had undertaken a thorough impact assessment of the implications of a delay in the FiReControl and, at its meeting on 9 September 2010, the Fire Authority had authorised the procurement and installation of an interim mobilising solution. The project was now underway and the current assessment by officers was that the existing system would remain operational and serviceable pending its replacement.

3. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members noted the draft Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 8 February 2011 and agreed an amendment to its Terms of Reference to oversee the production of, and approve, the Authority's Annual Governance Statement on Internal Control and the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP

Members noted the draft Minutes of the Group held on 8 February 2011 agreed a suite of Corporate Services performance indicators and targets for 2011/12.

The Government had issued new investment guidance on changes to the capital finance system and, to facilitate this, the Authority considered documents relating to the Treasury Management Strategy, Financial Regulations, Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices.

5. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2011/12

Members agreed a calendar of meetings for 2011/12.

6. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12

Members' Budget Workshops held on 10 December 2010 and 12 January 2011 had considered the detail of the proposed Budget.

The agreed 2011/12 Revenue Budget was £28.357M with Council Tax remaining at the 2010/11 level of £82.44 per Band D equivalent property.

7. INFORMATION BULLETIN

The Combined Fire Authority received a Bulletin containing information on various matters relating to the Fire and Rescue Service, including incidents of note and compliments.

Amongst the items reported were:

A resident from Bedford expressed thanks:

At approximately 2 pm on 14 November 2010 I was locked in my flat and called for help. Within minutes (the) crew arrived and assisted me in getting my door open with no damage to the property.

My accolades to them are because of their speed of response, extreme courtesy and skill they exercised in what you may consider a non event. To me it was a difficult time as I was trapped with a terrible feeling of helplessness until they arrived.'.....

A resident from Stevington sent thanks to the Service:

.....'I would like to thank everyone concerned in replacing my faulty electric blanket, which was handed back to me as safe to use with a passed sticker on the plug on the last day of the Fire Service checking electrical goods in Bedford town centre.

From my telephone conversation I was treated with courtesy and the replacement blanket was delivered to my home within hours. Again a big thank you.'.....

A member of the public expressed their thanks to the Service via the website:

.....'Can I just say a very big thank you – yours was a very helpful and useful website. I am trying to set up fire risk assessments for a community centre and your site has been so useful. Thank you again.'.....

A resident from Baldock expressed thanks following a road traffic collision:

.....'It is a year since my son had a serious car accident This has brought back lots of horrible memories and has prompted me to write to you, which should have been done at the time, but these things are put to the back of your mind.

My son had many injuries and was in hospital for 8 weeks, a wheelchair for 4 weeks and then crutches until he was strong enough to walk alone. We were told by the consultant at Addenbrookes Hospital where he was airlifted to that he was very lucky and if it wasn't for

the knowledge that both yourselves and the ambulance crew have his accident could have been fatal.

His accident happened on my late Nan's birthday and I believe she was his guardian angel that day, but your crew were also his guardian angels and we cannot thank you enough for that day.

People really don't realise the hard and dangerous work you do until they have to use your services and without you that day our lives could have been so different and sad.

I would like to wish you all and your families a very Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.'.....

soLUTiONs, Luton Borough Council, wrote following a public event attended by the Service:

.....'Just a note of thanks to you all for organising the exhibition stands at the Summit on Monday. They all looked really professional and added an extra dimension to the event. They definitely contributed to the success of the evening, I am sure that attendees found them informative and interesting. Also thank you all for clearing away everything so efficiently afterwards.'.....

The Headteacher, Church End Lower School, Marston Moretaine wrote:

.....'On behalf of all at the school I would like to express my sincere thanks for your assistance on Monday when the school had to be evacuated due to an electrical problem. I was very pleased with how smoothly the evacuation went and very grateful for everyone's help on what was an exceedingly cold day.'.....

**COUNCILLOR JOHN STREET
EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**