

East Sussex Fire Authority**Report of a meeting of the East Sussex Fire Authority held at Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters at 10.00 hours on Thursday 3 February 2011.**

Present: Councillors Carden, Fawthrop, Freebody, Harmer-Strange, Healy, Heaps, Howson, Kemble (Chairman), Kenward, Livings, Marsh, Ost, Pidgeon, Scott, Sparks, Thomas and Waite.

1. FIRE AUTHORITY SERVICE PLANNING PROCESSES FOR 2011/12 AND BEYOND

- 1.1 The Fire Authority has considered joint reports of the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and the Treasurer concerning the draft Fire Authority Service Planning and Revenue Budget processes for 2011/12 and beyond.
- 1.2 The Deputy Treasurer reported that both he and the Treasurer had been satisfied that the estimates used for the purposes of calculating the Budget had been produced in a robust and transparent way and the proposed financial reserves were prudent, necessary and in line with Fire Authority policy.
- 1.3 Members recalled that the 2011/12 Committed Budget of £39.328m and related detailed provisions, fees and charges, etc and the 2011/12 to 2015/16 Capital Programme had been previously approved and that prior consideration had been given to Service Investment Proposals.
- 1.4 Members noted final figures for the formula grant would enable a Revenue Budget to be set at £39.203m. Council Tax Band D could be kept to £81.86, the same level as for 2010/11 on the basis that the Authority would receive an additional grant equivalent to a 2.5% increase in Council Tax from central government. Final figures for the Council Tax Base and Collection Fund Surplus enabled further flexibility of £210,000 in 2011/12, of which £77,000 was one-off, which would be used to fund transitional costs in line with the existing service investment proposals.
- 1.5 The Deputy Treasurer noted that whilst the reductions in grant funding for 2011/12 and 2012/13 were lower than had been anticipated at 5%, the Authority should still plan for reductions of a further 20% in the last two years of the CSR period. Current modelling assumptions would require additional savings close to £2.5m over the period 2012/13 – 2014/15.
- 1.6 The Fire Authority has approved the necessary detailed budget and service planning decisions including:
 - (i) approving its budget requirement for 2011/12 as £39.203m; a reduction of 0.28% on the 2010/11 base budget of £39.314m;

- (ii) approving a council tax precept (Band D property) for the year 2011/12 of £81.86 (based on final tax base figures), a nil increase on the 2010/11 figure of £81.86; and
- (iii) agreeing that Brighton & Hove City Council and the borough and district councils (the billing authorities) be advised by the Treasurer of the relevant amounts payable and the council tax in the other bands.

2. **LOCALISM BILL**

- 2.1 Members noted an update on the Localism Bill and the principal provisions affecting Fire & Rescue Authorities. The legislation aimed to deliver more freedom and flexibility to local authorities and the power would be given to stand alone Fire Authorities to do anything it considered:
- (a) appropriate for the fulfilling of its statutory responsibilities;
 - (b) appropriate for purposes incidental to its statutory responsibilities; as well as
 - (c) to be indirectly connected with (a) or (b).
- The Bill also set out what Authorities could not do.

3. **MEMBER ALLOWANCES – ANNUAL REVIEW**

- 3.1 The Fire Authority has reviewed the Members' Allowance Scheme and has agreed a nil increase for 2011/12.

COUNCILLOR TED KEMBLE
CHAIRMAN OF EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY
7 February 2010