

Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 17 May 2016 at 2.00 pm in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, Ipswich.

Present: Councillors Colin Noble (Chairman), James Finch, Tony Goldson, Matthew Hicks, Beccy Hopfensperger, Christopher Hudson, Gordon Jones, Richard Smith MVO and Sarah Stamp

Also present: Councillors Jenny Antill, Sonia Barker, Mark Bee, Peter Beer, Tony Brown, John Burns, Terry Clements, James Crossley, Mary Evans, Jessica Fleming, Julian Flood, Sandra Gage, Peter Gardiner, Michael Gower, Derek Hackett, David Hudson, Len Jacklin, Inga Lockington, Sandy Martin, Guy McGregor, Bill Mountford, Penny Otton, Bert Poole, Joanna Spicer, Jane Storey and David Wood.

Supporting officers present: Susan Cassedy (Democratic Services Officer).

#### **107. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies of absence received.

#### **108. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interests or dispensations reported.

#### **109. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **110. Public Questions**

There were no public questions received.

#### **111. Standing Item – Update from the Scrutiny Chairman**

At Agenda Item 5 the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee provided the Cabinet with an update on recent Scrutiny activity.

**Decision:** The Cabinet noted the Scrutiny Update.

**Reason for decision:** The Cabinet recognised the importance of the Scrutiny function.

**Comments by other councillors:** There were no other comments.

**Alternative options:** None considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None declared.

**Dispensations:** None reported.

## **112. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan**

A report at Agenda Item 6 by the Chief Fire Officer invited the Cabinet to consider the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2015-18. The IRMP had been informed by a detailed 14-week period of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that he had listened to concerns raised about the current efficiency and overall future resilience of the Service and for that reason 3 important principles were to be applied for the future of the Service through to the end of 2019/20 and the current spending review period as follow:

- i) The first principle was there would be no closure of a fire station in Suffolk;
- ii) The second principle was that there will be no further reduction in the number of front line fire engines;
- iii) The third principle was that there would be no further reductions in funding of the fire service beyond what was to be discussed at the meeting in the current spending review period.

**Decision:** The Cabinet:

- a) noted the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Strategy (Appendix A);
- b) noted the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Response (Appendix B);
- c) agreed the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Authority IRMP 2015-18 (Appendix C);
- d) agreed to remove the proposal to replace the second fire engine at Sudbury fire station with a smaller rapid response fire engine and, instead, to maintain the current two standard fire engines and on-call firefighter crewing;
- e) agreed to remove the proposal to close Wrentham fire station and, instead, to maintain the fire station and replace the existing standard fire engine with a smaller rapid response fire engine and reduce the establishment of on-call firefighters from 11 to 8;
- f) agreed to remove the proposal to withdraw the on-call fire engine from Ipswich (Princes Street) fire station and, instead, to maintain the fire engine and on-call firefighter establishment;
- g) agreed to remove the second full-time crewed fire engine from Ipswich (Princes Street) fire station and reduce the number of full-time firefighters by 16 instead of the originally proposed 20. The additional 4 full-time firefighters will be used to support on-call fire engine availability across the county during weekdays;
- h) supported the establishment of either a new 'blue light' fire station in the centre of Ipswich, or a refurbishment of the existing Ipswich (Princes Street) fire station, as determined by a business case;

- i) agreed to remove the third fire engine from Ipswich (East) fire station and reduce the establishment of on-call firefighters at the station from 21 to 15;
- j) agreed to remove the third fire engine from Bury St Edmunds fire station and reduce the establishment of on-call firefighters at the station from 21 to 15;
- k) agreed to remove the third fire engine from Lowestoft South fire station and reduce the establishment of on-call firefighters at the station from 21 to 15; and
- l) noted the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Plan 2016-19 (Appendix D).

**Reason for decision:** The National Framework provided clear guidance that an IRMP must reflect effective consultation with the community, workforce, representative bodies and partner organisations. The proposals agreed by Cabinet in November 2015 had been significantly adjusted to reflect the views of those who took part in and responded to the consultation. The adjustment to the proposals had been cross-referenced against the range of views and concerns that were raised through the consultation and each adjustment, to a greater or lesser extent, had a positive impact against the points raised.

The draft IRMP was agreed, for consultation, by Cabinet in November 2015 and set out the Authority's analysis of risk and demand across Suffolk, and the wider UK, and considered the outcomes of the service provided by firefighters and staff in Suffolk.

The draft IRMP included a range of specific proposals about which the Authority sought the views of the public and stakeholders. This was to inform the development of a redesign of the way in which the fire and rescue service was delivered across Suffolk, against the backdrop of further reductions in grant funding and a requirement to provide a service that took appropriate account of risk and demand.

In its budget, agreed by the Full Council at its meeting of 11 February 2016, the County Council set out its plan to realise savings of £34.4m in 2016-17 and then further provisional savings of £38.5m in 2017-18. The fire and rescue service, as part of this savings plan, was required to find savings of £300k in 2016-17 and a further provisional saving of £1m in 2017-18, subject to the future budget setting process. The proposals contributed to this savings plan.

**Comments by other councillors:** All other Cabinet Members congratulated the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection and the Chief Fire Officer for the comprehensive consultation which had taken place and the subsequent amended recommendations as set out in the report. Cabinet Members also recognised the dedication of all fire fighters.

The Cabinet Member for Health advised that nothing significant had come out of the consultation meetings in Lowestoft and that Wrentham and surrounding villages had been informed of the consultation meetings and that questions asked by members of the public had been addressed within the report. He advised that he was in overall support of the new revised proposals.

The Cabinet Member for Communities advised that it was the job of the Chief Fire Officer and his team to take the public feedback and the initial proposals, balance public opinion with professional knowledge and come up with a

proposed IRMP that best met the need of the people of Suffolk. She considered that Suffolk was fortunate to have an extremely experienced Chief Fire Officer and recognised and respected the fact that he and Councillor Hicks had attended every one of the public consultation events. With regard her local councillor role in Bury St Edmunds, she described it as a difficult emotive decision but she had to look at the county as a whole and that the 999 call volume in Bury was the lowest of all the three fire stations. The Cabinet Member for Communities was reassured that the IRMP could be revisited if necessary. In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that the risk profile was monitored continuously and that the professional view was that the service would be fit for purpose. He reassured the Chamber that no firefighters would be made redundant and reduction in numbers would be via natural turnover.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care was pleased to see that the Fire Service's Safer Home visits would continue as they played an important role in supporting vulnerable elderly people. With regard her local councillor role in Bury St Edmunds, the Cabinet Member for Adult Care advised that she did have concerns and recognised the huge level of feeling locally. She was pleased to see that arguments had been listened to. She stressed the importance of a resilient workforce in the long term with new housing development in Bury and had noted that, should the risk increase, the IRMP would be amended. The Cabinet Member for Adult Care was delighted with regard to the three principles and stressed that she would be unable to support any further reductions. In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that over the last five years 999 calls in Suffolk had dropped by 26% despite the increase in housing however this would continue to be monitored closely.

The Cabinet Member for Finance fully supported the revised proposals and advised that the Fire Service could not be exempt from savings in future years, encompassing this IRMP 2015-18, but was pleased to hear that the budget gap would be met while keeping to the three principles.

The Cabinet Member for Ipswich in noting the challenges that would be faced in Ipswich recognised the opportunities that the blue light fire station at Princes Street would provide.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills noted that very few members of the public had attended meetings in Ipswich but there had been good attendance in Sudbury. This had given him confidence in the amended recommendations. He noted that the Fire Service played an important role in youth engagement and was a much valued provision.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport commended the quality of the report and supported the recommendations and noted the frequent use of the term 'professional judgement'. Officers advised that it was a combination of the engagement process and professional judgement which had produced the proposals and that there was confidence in Suffolk being a safe place to live.

In response to a Councillor's concern regarding the capabilities of a rapid response vehicle, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that a working party which would include fire fighters would look at the

exact requirements. He pointed out that a rapid response vehicle would be able to get to an incident quicker and would only need two or three firefighters in order to operate.

A Councillor considered that this IRMP was more about cuts than risk and that it would be detrimental to the Fire Service, the public and property owners. He congratulated the Administration on the consultation process but noted that 78% of respondents had said no to the cuts. He set out his concerns regarding having to wait for on-call firefighters before tackling a fire in a high rise building and considered that this would put the people in Ipswich at risk and not having a second appliance was a mistake. In response the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection stated that the professional view was that the people of Ipswich continued to be safe with a resilient Fire Service able to meet their needs and stressed that the public risk would continue to be monitored. He acknowledged that on-call fire fighter availability was a big issue but was however pleased to report that more on-call fire fighters had joined in recent months which would improve availability across Suffolk.

A local Councillor for Sudbury spoke not only on his own behalf but on behalf of two other local councillors. He stated that they were all pleased to see that the comments of the people of Sudbury had been taken into account and they fully supported the second appliance remaining in Sudbury.

A Councillor noted the verbal assurances with regard to no further cuts but had concern that these commitments would not be kept. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection reiterated his commitment to the three principles and advised that the £300,000 shortfall would be met in other ways. He advised that when looking to make savings in any emergency service it was necessary to look at the risk profile whilst staying within budget.

A Councillor congratulated the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection on the consultation process and the robust and considered recommendations in the report. Another Councillor considered the professional expertise and consultation to be second to none and commended the paper. A further Councillor noted the importance of the speed at which accident victims reached intensive care and considered that the rapid response vehicles would help to achieve the 'Golden Hour'. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection confirmed that response times of all vehicles would be continued to be monitored and these statistics would be widely available.

In response to a Councillor's question the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that the duty of the Fire Service was to make sure Suffolk was a safe place to live and following receiving both the professional view and consultation results every proposal had been adjusted and he considered them to be well balanced.

In response to a Councillor's questions the Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection provided the figures for how many times Suffolk Fire Service went into neighbouring counties and how often neighbouring counties came into Suffolk. He advised that this was on a 'knock for knock' basis and there was no additional cost to Suffolk. He also advised that, with regard to combining blue light services at Elmswell fire and police station, it was for the Police and Crime Commissioner to determine the use by Police personnel.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection advised that, with regard to Lowestoft South, the Watch Commander would manage the rotation of on-call fire fighters and the second fire engine would be removed by being dropped out of the annual replacement.

A Councillor stated that on-call services would improve, money would be saved, the number of 999 emergency calls had reduced, the consultation was exemplary and all questions had been answered and he supported the recommendations.

Before asking the Cabinet to vote on the recommendations, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development stated that this had been the most comprehensive public consultation ever undertaken by the Council and views had been fully aired. He stressed that the Cabinet understood the issues and treated them with the gravity they deserved and did not take the decision lightly.

**Alternative options:** None considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None declared.

**Dispensations:** None reported.

### **113. Wet Dock Crossing Ipswich and Lake Lothing Third Crossing, Lowestoft**

A report at Agenda Item 7 by the Director for Resource Management invited the Cabinet to confirm the allocation of revenue and capital funding to take the work forward following Government financial support of £151 million for new crossings in Ipswich and Lowestoft has been confirmed. In order to deliver these schemes to challenging timescales significant work would have to be carried out to secure statutory consents, complete design, complete the full business case to release Department for Transport funding, and to procure their construction.

The Member with Special Responsibility announced that the name for the wet dock crossing in Ipswich would be 'Upper Orwell Crossing'.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport advised of an error in the recommendation which should have given the financial years of 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

**Decision:** The Cabinet agreed to include the Ipswich Wet Dock Crossing and Lake Lothing Third Crossing in the Council's capital programme and to approve the expenditure of up to £10 million revenue funding and up to £10 million in capital funding over the financial years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 to develop each project to a point where a final business case could be submitted to Government.

**Reason for decision:** The proposed allocation of funding would enable work to continue on both schemes so that statutory consents could be obtained, the scheme designs had progressed to a point where scheme construction could be procured and a full business case submitted to the Department for Transport so that the Government funding could be released.

**Comments by other councillors:** In response to Councillor's comments and questions the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, the Cabinet

Member for Finance and the Member with Special Responsibility for Outside Bodies provided the following information:

- i) There was clearly a need for the wet dock crossing in Ipswich as there were currently fundamental problems with traffic congestion the reduction of which was one of the aims of the project as well as the other major economic benefits.
- ii) Following extensive discussion early indication showed that the Local Enterprise Partnership may make a larger financial contribution to the projects.
- iii) Consultation was the next phase and Ipswich Councillors would not be excluded and would be welcome to contribute and the Leader of Ipswich Borough Council was involved in the work.
- iv) Governance of such a project was very important due to the very tight timescales and the wider governance group would include a cross section of people including local councillors to ensure the project ran as quickly and as smoothly as possible.
- v) With regard to the Ipswich wet dock crossing becoming a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project this was not within the Council's powers but was currently in the process of being considered. The Member with Special Responsibility for Outside Bodies was to meet with Ben Gummer MP the following day to discuss further.
- vi) If the design competition idea for the Ipswich wet dock crossing, driven by Ben Gummer MP, was extended to include local people this may extend the time and the tight timescales may not then be met.
- vii) It was too early to state what the wide range of projects referred to in paragraph 10 of the report may be. Discussion would take place with the Director for Resource Management.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport took note of a councillor's comments regarding the design scope including linkages and how this would function and other associated developments.

The Cabinet thanked Peter Aldous MP, Ben Gummer MP and Councillor Mark Bee for their help and hard work in achieving the funding from central government.

**Alternative options:** None considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None declared.

**Dispensations:** None reported.

#### **114. Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

#### **115. The Cabinet considered whether Agenda item 10 should be taken without the Public (including the Press) present**

**Decision:** The Cabinet agreed to exclude the public (including the Press) from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 10.

**Reason for decision:** The Cabinet was satisfied that:

- i) it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as referred to under Parts 1 to 3 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended); and
- ii) in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

**Comments by other councillors:** There were no other comments.

**Alternative options:** None considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None declared.

**Dispensations:** None reported.

#### **116. Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Academy Free School Presumption Sponsor Recommendation**

A report at Agenda Item 10 invited the Cabinet to come to a decision about the most appropriate sponsor to recommend to the Department for Education to run the new SEMH Academy in the North of the County.

**Decision:** The Cabinet agreed to the recommendation as set out in the report; this recommendation would be passed onto the Department for Education and the Secretary of State.

**Reason for decision:** At present there were 347 pupils in Suffolk with SEMH stated as their primary need on their Education Health and Care (EHC) plan. This represented a significant proportion of learners. Although the majority of these learners were schooled in mainstream settings supported by the local offer, a significant percentage of learners with SEMH require specialist learning environments to cater to their specific needs.

There was currently no specialist provision in Suffolk to provide a suitable alternative learning environment for learners with SEMH, therefore 77 learners accessed Out of County provisions at an average cost of £48,000 per annum.

The decision to open a new school for these learners was taken by Cabinet in January 2016, and as a result a free school presumption had been launched to determine an appropriate sponsor to recommend to the Department for Education to run the provision.

**Comments by other councillors:** Councillors welcomed the provision. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills addressed the questions and concerns received from other Councillors at the meeting.

**Alternative options:** None considered.

**Declarations of interest:** None declared.

**Dispensations:** None reported.

*The meeting closed at 5.02 pm.*

Chairman