

NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES
MINUTES OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2025

Present: Mark Matthews, Chief Fire Officer
 Dave Norris, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
 Duncan Savage, Assistant Director of Resources/Treasurer
 Doug Marshall, Assistant Director of People Services
 Justine Cadogan, Assistant Director of Digital, Technology & Change
 Elizabeth Curtis, Communications & Marketing Manager
 Sue Walsh, Executive Assistant
 Amy Morton, Observer

Apologies: Hannah Youldon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
 Matt Lloyd, Assistant Director of Response and Risk Reduction
 George O'Reilly, T/Area Manager Protection

		Action
20/25	Minutes of the Meeting held 23 January 2025 The non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2025 were approved as an accurate record.	
21/25	Matters Arising None.	
22/25	Action Points from Matrix <u>238/24 HQ Consolidation</u> SLT agreed to crystallise and finalise Option 3 (re-configure existing HQ function into a reduced footprint in Amberly and retaining Malling House, with dedicated HR space and additional PO requirements) for formal sign off at SLT. This would be discussed in further detail under agenda item 9. Action complete. <u>241/24 Wholetime Vacancy Management and Trainee Course</u> Following SLT approval, in principle, to initiate a wholetime recruitment in the New Year, a training delivery plan and options would be produced. This would be discussed in further detail under agenda item 11. Action complete. <u>247/24 4i Decommission</u> ADoDTC would provide a verbal update under agenda item 12 in order to formally close this down. Action complete. <u>09/25 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2025-26</u> ADoR/T would prepare and finalise a list of potential audits for 2025/26 for SLT to review and consider at the March meeting. A meeting with Cllr Peter Pragnell, Chair of the S&A Panel would also take place, which would assist prioritisation of this going forwards.	ADoR/T Mar 25
23/25	Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 Monitoring at Month 10 ADoR/T provided a verbal overview of the latest position and noted that the previous £1.4m overspend at Period 8 had now shifted dramatically. At Period 10 there was now an estimated underspend of £600,000, which was not expected to change too much ahead of year-end. In total, between Period 4 to 10, there had been a £1.7m swing. If the position continued to stay the same, ADoR/T recommendation to SLT was to move this straight into Reserve and Balances in order to cover future costs including NICS.	

	Changes in Response & Risk Reduction had meant that the underspend had come down from £453,000 to £256,000. Treasurer Management had noted good returns on higher than expected balances. Overall terms, ESFRS was in good financial position which provided greater flexibility in 2025-26. With regards to Capital, further slippage had taken place in Estates and Fleet, due to the multi-purpose hub and wider project issues. The anticipated capital project slippage for year-end was now £4m against a total budget of £11.3m. It was confirmed that there would be a formal written report brought to SLT in March, following further review and scrutiny in the interim. SLT held a discussion around the next financial year 2025-26 with regards to forecasting, vacancies, organisational need, budget setting and operating models (including MTFP, enabling services, ops). Financial planning meetings (pre-Star Chamber) with SLT would assist in maintaining financial sustainability and provide clarity on underspent areas and those which are likely to remain so. This would be picked up by Assistant Directors. CMM shared her thoughts from a comms perspective on how best to share this message and provided initial suggestions such as through a campaign, face to face conversations and possibly via the Managers Seminar on 2 April 2025. It was considered important that any messages could be shared by others, in addition to ADoR/T. This piece would also form part of the Communications Strategy in terms of agreed key messages, stakeholders and links to Policy & Resources. DCFO enquired about the frequency of formal reporting to SLT. ADoR/T stated that there would be a written report provided on a bi-monthly basis with an interim update focussing on necessary detail. SLT indicated that there were unable to review or fully consider the organisations financial sustainability and monitoring without sight of the financial reports and agreed to the revised battle rhythm. Focus would be made on high-risk areas such as training, IT and Estates.	ADoR/T Mar 25
24/25	Call Over The following reports were not called over, and therefore all recommendations contained within them were agreed:- - Gender Pay Gap - Internal Audit Report – Vehicle Usage 2024/25	
25/25	HQ Consolidation Options ADoR/T provided a verbal update on the latest position, stating that ESFRS were still in discussions with Sussex Police, but that further conversations with the Estates Manager had taken place. ADoR/T outlined current options, and the flexibility which was required in order to deliver savings. SW re-shared details of the previous discussion held at SLT on 11 December 2025 for reference. A full and formal written report would be brought to SLT in March.	ADoR/T Mar 25
26/25	Gender Pay Gap ADoPS provided SLT with an overview of the figures from 2024 as well as	

	approval of report content for publication on the ESFRS website. The Services' Mean and Median gender pay gap has reduced in 2024, further to the Mean decrease seen in the 2023 report. SLT approved the publication of the content of the report. This would also be discussed further at the Assistant Directors meeting and brought back to SLT only as required.	
27/25	Wholetime Trainee Firefighter Course Options Appraisal The COT Manager stated that the purpose of the report was to set out the delivery options for the running of a Wholetime Trainee Course in 2025/26. It presents 3 delivery options that marry up with the current recruitment timeline: - Joint course with SFRS - Hybrid course with FSC - Internal ESFRS course The paper also provides clarity on indicative costings and when a Wholetime Course could be delivered. ADoR/T felt that this report did not provide a full financial position and there was a further discussion needed around available and alternative options and the cost implications of these. SLT also required further details on resourcing, numbers, final costings and timelines and enquired whether a working group was in place to consider these areas. The internal Wholetime Trainee Course was currently scheduled to start in September 2025. SLT recommended that a revised report was brought back to SLT in April in order to provide further clarity. The COT Manager felt that the proposed start date would not be impacted by this option. CFO then gave his recommendation on the various key points to be included in the revised report; a) ensure there was sufficient resourcing in place to hold it at STC, b) maintain adequate crewing elsewhere across the Service, c) costing - both clarity on numbers and expected costs, including those when trainee's on station and d) give assurances within the report that recruitment syllabus and materials are in place to deliver a successful course. CFO would also feedback to ACFO and ADoRRR post-meeting. SLT noted the contents of this report and the intention for ESFRS to run an internal Wholetime Trainee Course for 16 starting September 2025. Any further decisions would be agreed upon receipt of the revised report at SLT in April.	ADoPS Apr 25
28/25	4i decommission ADoDTC provided a verbal update around the residual risk on loss of data. Further work was being undertaken in order to carry out a risk assessment for SLT to formally approve. It was anticipated having a draft by end of March, in readiness for SLT to consider in April.	ADoDTC Apr 25
29/25	Internal Audit Report – Vehicle Usage 2024/25 This internal audit was undertaken as part of the agreed plan for 2024/25. It	

	followed on from an Internal Audit which highlighted concerns in relation to the potential misuse of fleet vehicles including allegations of personal use and general use outside of policy requirements. The objective of the audit was to review the use of ESFRS's fleet vehicles to provide assurance that vehicles are only used in line with organisational policy. The audit gives 'minimal' assurance. The report makes 7 findings of which 1 is high, 5 are medium risk and 1 is low risk. The Service has decided to set up a Task and Finish Group (T&FG) to consider these recommendation and implement the changes needed to provide the reassurance required. It has also been decided to add an additional action related to the timeliness of submitting vehicle accident investigation reports to our insurance provider. All actions are targeted for completion by 30 June 2025 and will include consultation with staff and representative bodies on changes to any manual note. SLT: a) approved the management response to the audit report so that it can be finalised b) agreed that the target dates for implementation will be the 30 June 2025 c) noted that the report will be taken to next Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 24 April 2025.	
30/25	SLT Forward Plan 2025 and FA/Members Seminar Forward Plan SLT noted the forward plans for 2025, which was a useful overview for the coming months and considered the volume of reports currently scheduled in for the next meeting in March. The sign off on <u>Business Plans 2024/25</u> was discussed, which in turn would input into the forthcoming SLT Workshop on 27 March 2025. SLT agreed that Corporate Plans would go to the Fire Authority on 12 June 2025. This led to a conversation about thematic plans in general. CFO would write to Chief Executives at BHCC, ESCC and WSCC regarding <u>Devolution</u>, ahead of the interim proposals due for submission to MHCLG on 21 March 2025. This would help form the content for the Members Seminar on Devolution due to held on 6 March 2025. <u>SLT Development Sessions</u> ADoPS provided an overview of the 3 sessions due to take place during 2025. These would assist in formalising the continued development plan, include SLT 360 feedback and the collation of themes. Once agreed, ADoPS would source and tailor the training to support this going forwards. <u>Members Seminars</u> 26 March - Lithium batteries and Fort Road. Also include an initial precis from the recent HMICFRS hot debrief on 21 February 2025? 22 May – Right timing to present HMICFRS report together with an early CRMP update and budget update. <u>Managers Seminar</u> 2 April – Complaints Handling, Budget & Future Foundations. 8 July – HMICFRS Inspection, 2 further topics to be confirmed	CFO Mar 25

31/25	Date of Next Meeting The next meeting will be held on 18 March 2025	
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