

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 10.00 am on 7 September 2017 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Tuesday, 7 November 2017.

Elected Members:

- * Rachael I. Lake (Chairman)
- Mr Saj Hussain (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Bob Gardner
- * Mr David Goodwin
- * Miss Alison Griffiths
- * Mr Richard Hampson
- * Miss Marisa Heath
- * Mrs Jan Mason
- * Mr Cameron McIntosh
- * Mrs Lesley Steeds
- Ms Barbara Thomson
- * Mr Keith Witham

* = In attendance

In attendance

Steve Burnell, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Group Commander
Ann Charlton, Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services
Denise Turner-Stewart, Cabinet Member for Communities

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Barbara Thomson and Saj Hussain. Richard Wilson substituted for Barbara Thomson.

2 MINUTES OF THE RESIDENT EXPERIENCE BOARD MEETING: 9 MARCH 2017 [Item 2]

The minutes from the previous meeting (formerly the Resident Experience Board), 9 March 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

None were received.

4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

None were received.

5 TRANSFER OF EMPLOYMENT OF CORONER'S OFFICERS AND SOME SUPPORT STAFF FROM SURREY POLICE TO SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL [Item 5]

Witnesses:

Ann Charlton, Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services

Declarations of interest:

None

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members of the Communities Select Committee expressed concern regarding the costs proposed for transferring staff from the employment of Surrey Police to Surrey County Council (SCC) as outlined in the report. Officers advised that extensive negotiations had taken place with Surrey Police to reach the five year phased withdrawal plan. It was acknowledged that SCC would be taking on additional costs of £1.22m over the next five years and then £610k per annum on top of existing budgetary pressures arising from the transfer of staff but that the Council had a duty to provide a Coroner's Service.
2. Members suggested that a one off capital contribution of £50k from Surrey Police towards procuring a new IT system for the Coroner's Service may not be sufficient to cover the costs of the new system. Officers informed the Committee that Case Management Systems, which the Council was seeking to procure for the Coroner's Service, were less complex IT systems and so the cost associated with procuring these was lower than for other types of software.

3. The Committee was advised that due to the current financial climate, SCC's IT & Digital Team would assume responsibility for providing and maintaining IT for the Coroner's Service following the transfer. Members stressed that the financial implications should be reviewed to factor in IT costs.
4. It was noted that the Council's responsibilities were governed under the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, which states that the Council was required to meet all the costs of the Coroner's Service including body removal, post mortems and toxicology reports.
5. Members highlighted that the report made no reference to administration or location of staff following transfer over to SCC's employment. The Committee was informed that these were not mentioned in the report as staff would continue to operate from their existing offices situated in Woking. The Select Committee noted that administration staff within the Service were seconded in from Surrey Police and officers acknowledged that a review of working arrangements to provide a more stable staff environment.

Recommendations:

- a) The Committee has considered and endorses this proposal to Cabinet, with concern with the additional financial pressure it will bring.
- b) The committee acknowledges and also expresses concern that this is an additional statutory function for the Council to fund.

6 VERBAL UPDATE ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GRENFELL TOWER DISASTER [Item 6]

Witnesses:

Steve Burnell, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Group Commander

Declarations of interest:

None

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee received a presentation from the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service on the implications of the Grenfell Tower disaster, providing members with an information update on SFRS support and response as a result of this tragedy.
2. Using Gibson Court in Hinchley Wood as an example, officers explained how SFRS had contributed to improvements in fire safety in large residential buildings. Gibson Court was destroyed by fire in 2011 but was rebuilt with advice from SFRS. Once the building was finished SFRS also assessed the building to ensure that it could be occupied safely.

3. The Officer explained that Fire Safety Orders did not permit fire and rescue services to enforce fire safety in private dwellings although Community Safety teams did provide engagement and influence in this area.
4. Members requested further information on the processes in place for relinquishing control of a scene once the fire had been extinguished. They were informed that fire officers would remain on site until handover where there was a potential danger and risk to the public. Extending this period was difficult as SFRS had to be ready to respond to other emergencies.
5. Officers stated that buildings were classed as high rise if they were over 18metres tall or if they had more six floors or more. At the time of the meeting, there were 83 high rise buildings in Surrey. It was further stated that SFRS had vehicles capable of reaching 43 metres to tackle a blaze and that Surrey had one of the highest firefighting platforms nationally.
6. Discussions turned to the issue of compartmentation where buildings are sub-divided by design in order to restrict the spread of fire. Members expressed concern that there was lack of awareness about compartmentation. Officers acknowledged that compartmentation was complex but assured the Committee that compartmentation was well-known within the construction industry. SFRS would, however, add informative material to their website in order to provide additional information to the public on compartmentation. The Committee was further informed that the Regulatory Fire Safety Order places a duty on owners to carry out a risk assessment of their building/premises, including compartmentation, and to act on any issues identified within the risk assessment.
7. Members asked whether SFRS had experienced an increase in call outs involving white goods. Officers advised the Committee that this was not the case any misconception relating to this was caused by social media, publicising stories highlighting stories on white goods causing fires.
8. It was noted that significant work was taking place within SFRS to promote the installation of sprinklers within a private dwelling as a means of reducing fatalities arising from fires. There was no requirement on home owners to have fire extinguishers or blankets located within their property.
9. Members registered concerns in regard to the 'stay put' policy and queried which buildings this applied to in Surrey. It was noted that this information could be found on SFRS's website and the service were open to having discussions with occupiers how to plan going forward.

Recommendations:

The Committee notes the update and reports accordingly to the Overview and Budget Scrutiny Committee.

**7 SURREY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEMBER REFERENCE GROUP
SCOPING AND TERMS OF REFERENCE [Item 7]**

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee agreed the terms of reference for the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Member Reference Group.
2. The Committee supported the appointment of the following members to the Surrey Fire and Recuse Service Member Reference Group,
 - Cllr Saj Hussain (Chair)
 - Cllr Bob Gardner
 - Cllr Cllr Keith Witham
 - Cllr Alison Griffiths
3. It was noted that the Overview and Budget Select Committee would review and approve the terms of reference for the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Member Reference Group at its meeting on Thursday 14 September 2017.

Recommendations:

The Communities Select Committee:

- a) approved the draft Terms of Reference for the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan Member Reference Group;
- b) agreed the Membership of the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan Member Reference Group; and
- c) agreed to submit the Terms of Reference to the Overview and Budget Scrutiny Committee for approval.

8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 8]

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It was noted a user service was being launched regarding Surrey Performing Arts Library. Members suggested that once this survey had closed the Committee should receive a report on its outcome.

Recommendations:

None

9 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2017 [Item 9]

The next full meeting will be held on Tuesday 7 November 2017, in the Ashcombe Suite County Hall.

Meeting ended at: 12.09 pm

Chairman