

**MINUTES OF THE ETHICS, TRANSPARENCY AND AUDIT PANEL (ETAP) FIRE & RESCUE MEETING held on Wednesday 27 October 2021  
Conference Room 1, Block 7, Police HQ**

**Present:**

<b>ETAP members</b>	<b>Officers</b>
Alan Edwards (AE)	Jim Bywater - FARS Temporary Director of Response (JB)
Bob Simpson (BS) Chair	David Greensmith - FARS Director of Finance (DG)
Craig Brown (CB)	Corrina Bradley - FARS Deputy Chief Finance Officer (CBR)
Jane Barr (JB)	Glynn Dixon - SCO Chief Executive (GD)
Jane King (JK)	Victoria Farrar - SCO Head of Governance and Assurance (VF)
John Wheatley (JW)	Jean Cass - SCO Governance Lead (JC)
Sue Finney (SF)	
Ben Thompson (BT)	<b>Also in attendance</b>
Terry Scott (TS)	Mark Stocks - Grant Thornton (Teams) Item 6 only (heard first on the agenda.
Martyn Rochelle (MR)	

<b>SCO - Staffordshire Commissioner's Office</b>
<b>Force - Staffordshire Police Force</b>

**1. Declaration of interests and apologies.**

Declarations of Interest: - no declarations of interest were received.

Apologies: Emma Christmas (EC), Sue Westacott (SW) ETAP members. Rob Barber, Chief Fire Officer (RB), David Greensmith, FARS, Director of Finance (DG), Angela Ward (AW) Senior Audit Manager, RSM.

BS welcomed three new ETAP members to the meeting today, Martyn Rochelle (MR), Terry Stock (TS) and Ben Thompson (BT). BS also welcomed to the meeting Jim Bywater (JB) FARS Temporary Director of Response who was attending on behalf of RB.

Minutes & actions of the meeting held on the 27 September 2021

Minutes of Previous Meeting

**AGREED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 September 2021 to be confirmed as an accurate and true record.

**Actions**

Updates to actions from previous meetings

- Item 1 Penetration testing – CBR, the testing has now been completed and a report has been received which includes a number of recommendations – complete

CBR advised that the Penetration Reports are now available on Huddle.

Q: MR, looking at the reports, are there any checks carried out in the background?

A: CBR, yes checks are in place and the manager is able to run audit check in the background.

BS thanked CBR for her update and the work in this area.

## **2. Deputy Chair's Feedback**

### **i. Chair of the Finance Panel - Alan Edwards (AE)**

No update was presented to the meeting; this item was covered at the previous ETAP Public Fire meeting on the 27 September.

### **ii. Deputy Chair of Thematic Reviews – Jane King (JK)**

JK gave a verbal update in the following areas: -

#### **Covid**

JK, the Covid FARS Report on staff wellbeing has now been presented to the SGB meeting and is now available on the SCO website.

#### **Grenfell Review report update**

The scope for this review has been shared with RB and Glynn Luznyj. The review team will be led by SW with support from CB and BT. The team will be holding their next meeting at Fire Headquarters on the 5<sup>th</sup> November at Fire HQ.

#### **Ethics and Review Panel (ERP)**

BT and TS have joined ERP to help support the Panel. Howard Watts, Director of Prevent and Protect, will be joining the next meeting to share update at the imbedding of the Fire Core Code of Ethics; this is an update on an early presentation by RB earlier in the year. At the next meeting the panel will also be looking to finalised next year's work plan and other areas for review.

Copy of all ETAP thematic reviews published to date can be found on the SCO website

<https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/transparency/etap>

BS thanked JK for her update.

## **3. Police, Fire and Crime Panel (PFCP) (verbal feedback)**

EC is now attending PFCP meetings as an observer on behalf of ETAP members.

BS, on behalf of EC, advised at the PFCP meeting on the 12 October the main item was the successful appointment of RB to the post of Chief Fire Officer. BS advised that the last PFCP meeting was on Monday 25 October.

GD advised that at this meeting, the draft Fire and Rescue plan 2021 - 2024 was presented to the PFCP and this plan is currently out for consultation. The plan is more in line with previous the Fire and Rescue plans and has less changes than in revised draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024.

One area that is included in the Fire and Rescue plan is moderation, this represents changes that are taking place both locally and nationally.

Q:AE, are there any areas of statutory consultation?

A: GD, a range of stakeholders, including both statutory and non-statutory are being consulted and there are separated consultation meetings for the Exec Teams for both services.

GD offered to hold a consultation session with ETAP members on the draft plans with the Commissioner.

**ACTION:** JC to arrange a consultation session on the draft Police & Crime and Fire & Rescue Plans for 2021 – 2024 with ETAP members

#### 4. Governance Highlight Report

JB presented the Governance Highlight report on behalf of RB.

The report sets out the progress in a number of areas:

1. HMICFRS reports and recommendations
2. ETAP reports and recommendations – significant progress have been made on these recommendations
3. Other External reports recommendations
4. Strategic Risk Register

Q: CB, Risk No 8, has FARS experienced any issues in the supply chain with Brexit?

A: JB, work has started a while ago in preparation for Brexit on several of our supply chains. There is current concern with components which is being managed nationally.

Q: CB, Risk 3, Airwaves, have you carried out any modeling on the effect of this change both operationally and on the costs.

A: JB: So far this is coming in waves, FARS are being led nationally on the de-commissioning of Airwaves and we do have the assurance that this should be seamless.

Q: SF: Risk 9, can the Panel have more detail on this risk please?

A: AW, Risk 9, relates to changes in the Pension Scheme; the risk relates to the amount of fire fighters who could leave the service at the same time due to their 25-year date. The risk includes the loss of experienced fire personnel and significant costs being incurred in terms of administration and application of case law remedies.

BS thanked JB for his presentation of this report.

## **5. Going Concern Assessment**

CBR introduced this report on behalf of DG. This report has previously been presented to the Finance Panel.

This report reviews the guidance on the going concern provided by CIPFA and assesses the going concern of the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

The assessment report covers five main areas: -

- i. Resource Control Reporting / Management Accounts
- ii. Cash Flow
- iii. Capital Financing Requirement
- iv. Reserves
- v. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

This report will now be produced annually by the Section 151(S151) Officer and presented to ETAP.

Going Concern Conclusion reached within the report confirms that: -

The code of Practice states that the concept of a going concern assumes that an authority's functions and services will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The key factors that need to be considered when undertaking a going concern review have been covered within this paper and the S151 Officer supports the evidence presented that the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority should be treated as a going concern.

BS thanked CBR for her update.

## **6. External Audit**

MS gave the Panel an update and confirmed that the audit of the Statutory Accounts is now complete and confirmed that the satisfactory opinion has now been issued on Friday 22 October. The accounts can be published on the website.

BS asked CBR to confirm the accounts timeline for the production of the accounts.

CBR, as advised by the Accounts and Audit Regulator, the draft statutory accounts were required to be completed and published on the 30 July 2021. This is an extended date this year due to Covid. The Finance Team met this deadline.

The audit started on the 28 June was complete from FARS's perspective and the accounts were finalised by on the 27 Sept. However, there was a delay with EY issuing the LPGS Assurance letter and therefore the deadline for publications of the final accounts was missed.

BS thanked the CBR, the Finance Team and Auditors on behalf of ETAP members for their collaborative working to meet the accounts and audit deadlines.

## **7. AOB**

Q: AE, asked GD for an update on the bringing together of Fire and Police and the creating of one corporate soul.

A: GD, updates are expected on the corporate sole arrangements, the Grenfell 2 report and an update on the role of fire fighter.

- i. Date of the next meeting is Wednesday 16 February 2022.

DRAFT