

**Non-Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 25 February 2015, at 3.00 pm
at Shropshire Education and Conference Centre, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams, Austin, Mrs Barrow, Carter, Hartin, Hurst-Knight, Dr Jones, Mellings, Minnery (Vice-Chair), Price, Roberts, Thompson, West (Chair) and Wynn

Officers

Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer, Head of Finance, Clerk to the Fire Authority, Corporate Support Manager and Executive Support Officer

The Chair welcomed Councillor Roberts back to the Fire Authority following Councillor Bennett's resignation from Shropshire Council.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Bould, Kiernan and Miss Reynolds and the Chief Fire Officer.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The Chair reminded Members that they must not participate in the discussion of, or voting on any matter, in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Mellings and Minnery declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in items 10 and 11, in that they were directors on the board of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. They had been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee, which allowed them to take part in the discussion of, and vote on, matters relating to Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services, providing that legal opinion considered the participation to be appropriate.

On this occasion, item 10 on the agenda fell within the dispensation, as it was the minutes of a meeting, which were to be noted. Item 11, however, required the Fire Authority to make a decision and it was, therefore, deemed appropriate for Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Mellings and Minnery to leave the meeting, when this item was debated and voted on.

Councillor Price declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 18, as he was in receipt of a pension from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Committee Clerk's note

In relation to item 13 on the agenda – Revenue Budget: 2015/16 Precept, the Clerk, in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 18 July 2012, had granted dispensations to all Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Members to take part in the discussion of, and voting on, the setting of the Fire Authority budget and/or precept and the Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances. The dispensation was valid from 12 December 2012 to 11 December 2016.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 10 December 2014.

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Carter, and, with Councillors Adams, Mellings, Minnery, Roberts and Thompson abstaining as they had not been present at the meeting, it was

Resolved that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 10 December 2014, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

4 Public Questions

No questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public.

5 Audit and Performance Management Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 29 January 2015, and considered the recommendation at item 6 relating to the programme of audits for 2015/16.

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Roberts, and

Resolved that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 29 January 2015, be noted and that the recommendation at item 6, as given below, be agreed.

Item 6 – Programme of Audits for 2015/16

Resolved that the Fire Authority approve the programme of audits for 2015/16

6 Brigade Managers' Employment Panel Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meeting, held on 3 February 2015.

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meeting, held on 3 February 2015

7 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 3 February 2015, and considered the recommendations at items 5, 7 and 8.

The Chair advised that recommendation a) on paper 7b related to paper 9 on this agenda, which was to be considered in exempt session.

With regard to item 5 on the minutes – Financial Performance to December 2014, Councillor Mellings asked if there was any estimate of what the Authority's underspend would be at the year end. The Head of Finance (HoF) explained that underspend was monitored and managed throughout the year. To date all significant issues had been identified for the year and officers did not, therefore, anticipate there being a large underspend at the year end.

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Hartin, and

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 5 February 2015, be noted

Item 5 - Financial Performance to December 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Wynn, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve movements and virements to the revenue budget, where requested; and
- c) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2014/15

Item 7 - Capital Programmes 2015/16 to 2019/20 and Prudential Guidelines

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Thompson, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- b) Approve the Prudential Indicators and the Treasury Strategy for 2015/16;
- c) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision 2015/16; and
- d) Approve the Treasury Management Practices and Main Principles for 2015/16

Item 8 - Adequacy of Provisions and Reserves and Robustness of Budget

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Wynn, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree:

- a) i) The reserves and provisions, as set out in the appendix to the report; and

- ii) The Treasurer's assurances covering the robustness of the 2015/16 budget and adequacy of the reserves and provisions; and
- b) To note the material uncertainties from 2016/17 onwards

8 Local Government Act 1972

It was proposed by Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow, and

Resolved that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting room for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined by the provisions of Part I of Schedule 12(A) to the Act, by virtue of Paragraph 3

9 Capital Programmes 2015/16 to 2019/20 and Prudential Guidelines (Paragraph 3)

Members received the paper on Capital Programmes 2015/16 to 2019/20 and Prudential Guidelines (the appendix to paper 7b).

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Minnery, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the recommendation of its Strategy and Resources Committee to:

- a) Confirm the 2015/16 onward programmes, set out in exempt paper 9, as part of its final precept deliberations

10 Audit and Performance Management Committee Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 3)

Members received the exempt minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 29 January 2015.

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Roberts, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the exempt minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 29 January 2015

11 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Annual Report (Paragraph 3)

This report provided an update on the activities of the Fire Authority controlled company Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd and asked the Authority to approve the revised Business Plan, attached as an appendix to the report.

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Mellings and Minnery left the meeting at this point (3.12 pm).

It was proposed by Councillor Wynn, seconded by Councillor Hurst-Knight, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the report; and
- b) Approve the Revised Business Plan

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Mellings and Minnery returned to the meeting at this point (3.15 pm) and the meeting reverted to open session.

12 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Planning 2015/16

This report incorporated the recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2015, and by the Strategic Risk and Planning Group (StRaP) Members' Working Group on 27 January 2015, in relation to the revenue budget for 2015/16. The report also confirmed the assumptions for medium-term financial planning.

The Head of Finance (HoF) advised that the report should be considered and agreed together with agenda item 13 – Revenue Budget: 2015/16 Precept.

The HoF referred to paragraph 5 of the report, which summarised the budget position for 2015/16 and the medium term and which showed that the Authority was predicted to have a surplus of £23,000 in 2019/20. This figure was, however, changeable and was based on a predicted precept increase of 1.99% each year.

Councillor Carter referred to the table at paragraph 5 of the report and asked for an explanation of the large increase in surplus between 2017/18 (£39,000) and 2018/19 (£445,000). The HoF explained that this was because in later years revenue surplus was changeable, because the capital programme had been funded.

Councillor Mellings acknowledged the Authority's improved position with regard to its medium-term budget but raised his concerns about what might happen to the budget strategy after the general election on 7 May 2015. The Authority's strategy needed to be clear and robust and mindful of what might occur in the future.

Councillor Mellings then asked if any recent consideration had been given to the figure used for Pay and Prices, which was currently 2.5%. The HoF explained that officers endeavoured to review the Pay and Prices figure throughout the budget setting process. Due to its nature, there would always be variances in this figure and it was monitored through the StRaP Working Group.

Referring to the budget figure for 2015/16, which was stated in the report as £20,899,000 but which was given as £20,954,000 in the report considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee in February 2015, Councillor Mellings asked for an explanation of the discrepancy. The HoF was unable to provide a detailed response to this question at the time but undertook to provide the information to Councillor Mellings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Councillor Price commented that critical analysis and evaluation was undertaken of everything that the Authority did with regard to budget setting. Some decisions might have to be reversed, if there was a change in Government after 7 May. In light of this the Authority did need to make its budget strategy clear. He also acknowledged the good position that the Authority was now in, which was due to the work undertaken over the last few years.

Councillor Minnery commented that, whilst he had felt uneasy with the decisions made at the Strategy and Resources Committee in February, he now felt that it was the right thing to do because of the uncertainty that the Authority was facing.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority approve a revenue budget for 2015/16 and a forward financial projection to 2019/20, as set out in section 5 of the report

13 Revenue Budget: 2015/16 Precept

This report sought Fire Authority approval to a budget for 2015/16; Council Tax levels for 2015/16; and precepts on billing authorities and related matters.

Councillor Hartin referred to Appendix C, which set out the Authority's budget for provisions and reserves, and asked what the usage rate was for them. The HoF explained that the usage rate was 2.5%, which was well within the accepted levels.

Councillor Minnery asked that the work of the Treasury Team be recognised, as they always provided complex information in a clear and concise format.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Carter, and

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority approve:

- a) That a net budget requirement be set at £21,440,734 (calculated in accordance with the provisions of Section 43(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992);
- b) A total precept of £13,611,952 to be levied on the billing authorities;
- c) A Council Tax resulting in a basic amount of Council Tax at Band D calculated in accordance with the provisions of the 1992 Act (Section 44) of £92.22;
- d) Under Section 40(2) of the 1992 Act:
 - i) The amount of Council Tax calculated for each category of dwelling in each billing authority's area, as follows:

Band	2014/15 Council Tax
A	£ p 61.48

B	71.73
C	81.97
D	92.22
E	112.71
F	133.21
G	153.70
H	184.44

- ii) The amount calculated (in accordance with Section 48 of the 1992 Act) as payable by billing authorities for 2014/15, as follows:

Council	Precept £
Shropshire Council	9,444, 373
Borough of Telford & Wrekin Council	4,167,579
	<u>13,611,952</u>

- e) That the Treasurer:
- i) Issue the necessary precepts and information to the billing authorities in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV of Part 1 of the 1992 Act and be authorised to make any amendment to the above to reflect the final approved budget, after consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority; and
 - ii) Is authorised to make payments required from, and to, reserves and provisions within the approved budget strategy and within the Authority's Financial Rules, in conjunction with the Chair and the Vice-Chair;
- f) Approve the revenue budget and pensions account, illustrated in Appendix A, for budgetary control in accordance with approved standing orders;
- g) Approve the Service Reporting Code of Practice Provisional Revenue Account at Appendix B; and
- h) Approve the schedule of reserves and provisions at Appendix C

14 Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015 to 2020

This report presented the proposed Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Integrated Risk Management Plan to the Authority for consideration and adoption.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) explained to Members that the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) formed part of the Medium Term Corporate Plan but also functioned as a stand-alone document.

The DCFO stated that the IRMP was based on the bold and brave work by the Fire Authority that had gone before. It had been difficult to deliver this work but there had been a financial imperative to do so. There was now a focus on delivering the proposals, set out in the IRMP, especially the reviews related to Fire Control and the Integrated Crewing Model and it was key that the Service made these changes both efficient and effective.

Referring to page 25 of the document, and the targets that were given there, the DCFO explained that the wording of these targets would be changed before the document was published to reflect that the targets would be set on five-year trends and that they would be 'stretching' targets.

Councillor Dr Jones then moved the recommendations in the report and suggested that recommendation c) be amended to read 'authorise its publication with recognition of revised targets' to reflect the comments made the DCFO. This was seconded by Councillor Hartin, and it was

Resolved that the Fire Authority, having considered the contents of the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015 to 2020:

- a) Adopt the Plan; and
- b) Authorise its publication with recognition of revised targets

15 Annual Service Plan 2014/15

This report set out proposals for the annual Service Plan 2015/16 and the Fire Authority's Medium Term Corporate Plan (MTCP) 2015-2020.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) advised that, as requested by the Strategy and Resources Committee, a more user-friendly title would be devised for the Plans.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Hurst-Knight, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree the proposed format and contents of the Service Plan 2015/16;
- b) Delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Fire Authority, to agree the final wording and layout of the Service Plan;
- c) Delegate the setting of the Public Value measures to its Strategy and Resources Committee in March 2015;
- d) Agree the proposed format and structure of the Medium Term Corporate Plan 2015-2020; and
- e) Task officers with updating the Medium Term Corporate Plan to be presented to the Fire Authority in April 2015

16 Annual Review of Charges for Special Services

This report presented proposed increases in charges made for special services.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the proposed charges for special services to be applied from 1 April 2015

17 Proposed Amendments to the Pay Policy Statement

This report set out proposed amendments to the Pay Policy Statement for consideration by the full Authority, as required under the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with the process agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2012.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the proposed amendments to the Pay Policy Statement

18 New Pension Board for Firefighter Pension Schemes

This report informed of the requirement under the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 for public sector pension schemes to establish by 1 April 2015, a Pension Board for, in this instance, the Firefighter Pension Schemes.

The ACFO advised that the publication of final guidance on the establishment of the Pension Boards was still awaited from Government. She explained that officers were carrying out further research with regard to the Chair of the Board and that as yet there had been no definitive information given with regard to training requirements for Pension Board members. She added that it was anticipated that the terms of reference would be one of the first discussion items for the Board, when it met in or around June or July that year.

Referring to recommendation f) on the paper, the Chair suggested that this should be amended to read 'delegate to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer the task of establishing the Pension Board in consultation with the Chair of the Fire Authority'.

Councillor Minnery commented that he felt that the Chair of the Pension Board should be appointed by the Fire Authority and moved the recommendations to include the amendment suggested by the Chair. This was seconded by Councillor Roberts and it was

Resolved that, subject to any further changes arising from imminent national guidance, the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the mandatory requirement to establish a Pension Board by 1 April 2015;
- b) Agree the composition of the Pension Board;
- c) Agree the position of the Pension Board in the constitution;
- d) Agree the initial budget allocation for the Pension Board;
- e) Note the draft terms of reference of the Pension Board; and
- f) Delegate to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer the task of establishing the Pension Board, in consultation with the Chair of the Fire Authority.

19 Member Travel Allowances 2015/16

This report asked the Fire Authority to revisit the travel allowances due to come into effect in the 2015/16 Scheme for Payment of Members' Allowances in order to bring them in line with those paid to officers.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Carter, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the revised travel allowances, as set out in section 4 of the report

20 Details of Lives Saved and those Protected from Harm

This paper highlighted the number of people, who have been protected from harm, or rescued by operational crews during April 2014 to February 2015. It also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service.

The DCFO advised that this information would form the basis of rhetoric regarding the value provided by the Service and that it would be used increasingly in Service publicity. He added that Members were welcome to contact him if they had any questions relating to this information and its use in publicity materials.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the paper

21 Equality and Diversity Presentation

Councillor Dr Jones gave a presentation on her activities throughout the previous year as Member Champion for Equality and Diversity.

It was proposed by Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the presentation given.

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....