

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held on Wednesday, 5 October 2016, at 2.00 pm  
at Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

## **Present**

### **Members**

Councillors Adams, Barnes, Carter (Vice-Chair), Hartin, Hosken, Hurst-Knight, Dr Jones, Mellings, Murray, Pinter, Price, Roberts, Turley and West (Chair)

### **Officers**

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer, Head of Information Communications Technology, Clerk to the Fire Authority and Executive Support Officer

### **External Bodies**

Tracy Onslow (West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner) (from 2.15 pm onwards)

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Barrow, Minnery and Wynn.

## **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 that they should leave the room prior to commencement of the debate.

No Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were declared.

## **3 Public Questions**

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

## **4 Minutes**

### **4a 15 June 2016**

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting, held on 15 June 2016.

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

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting, held on 15 June 2016, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

#### **4b 28 June 2016**

Members received the minutes of the Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting, held on 28 June 2016.

The Fire Authority noted the following substitutions to the Interview Panel as set out at recommendation c) on page 2 of the minutes, which is that Councillor Jones will replace Councillor Turley and Councillor Price will replace Councillor Adams. The Chair clarified that these are substitutions to the Panel and not amendments to its membership.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Jones, and

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting, held on 28 June 2016, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **5 Audit and Performance Management Committee Minutes**

#### **5a 7 July 2016**

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 7 July 2016.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Mellings, and

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 7 July 2016, be noted.

#### **5b 15 September 2016**

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 15 September 2016, and considered the recommendation at item 8 relating to the Changes to Arrangements for Appointment of External Auditors; at item 10 relating to the review of the Whistleblowing Policy; and at item 11 relating to the Annual Review 2015/16.

It was proposed by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Mellings, and

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 15 September 2016, be noted and that the recommendations at items 8, 10 and 11, as given below, be agreed.

#### **Item 8 – Changes to Arrangements for Appointment of External Auditors**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the preferred approach, as recommended by the Committee for the appointment of external auditors, which is Option 3 – Opt-in to a Sector Led Body.

## **Item 10 – Review of Whistleblowing Policy**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree, without amendment, the Whistleblowing Policy, as recommended by the Committee.

## **Item 11 – Annual Review 2015/16**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the draft Annual Review 2015/16.

## **6 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes**

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 8 September 2016 and considered the recommendation at item 6 relating to Financial Performance to July 2016.

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

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 8 September 2016, be noted and the recommendations at item 6, as given below, be agreed.

### **Item 6 – Financial Performance to July 2016**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve virements to the revenue budget, where requested;
- c) Defer the decision regarding the one-off payment in advance to item 7 on the agenda for this meeting;
- d) Note changes to capital schemes and approve cancellation where specified;
- e) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2016/17; and
- f) Approve the transfer of £250,000 from the underspends detailed on page 2 of the report, to the reserve to fund staff costs for the Service Transformation Programme.

## **7 Mobile Data Purchasing**

This report sought approval to change the means of purchasing mobile data by moving to up-front payment for a bundle (known as a 'super bundle') to support the wider introduction of mobile working within the Service.

Councillor Hartin asked for clarification that the Service would not be spending any more by taking this approach to purchasing, that is that the normal year on year spend equates to the cost of the super bundle. Councillor Hartin also asked if officers were confident that 25 terabytes (TB) of data was a sufficient amount for the Service's needs. The Head of Information Communications Technology (ICT) responded that it was difficult to predict with regard to cost but there would be no wastage of data with this purchasing method. The Head of ICT also explained that the 25TB data super bundle is the most conservative approach to purchasing and that the data amount can be topped up if needed.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Adams, and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Approve changing the payment profile for mobile data from an annual revenue cost to a capital purchase;
- b) Approve the purchase of a 25TB data super bundle as outlined within this report; and
- c) Delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer to sign all documentation required to give effect to any agreement reached pursuant to b) above.

## **8 Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Efficiency Plan 2016-20**

This report presented the draft Efficiency Plan for approval of the Fire Authority, prior to its submission to the Home Office.

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented the report and thanked the Treasurer and Head of Finance for their work on the Efficiency Plan. The CFO also gave a narrative of how the Plan had been brought together. The Government had offered a four year funding settlement to 2019/20 to local authorities, including fire authorities, who undertook to submit a robust and transparent Efficiency Plan. Submitting an Efficiency Plan gives authorities an increased level of predictability with regard to the funding settlement. In addition, not submitting a Plan would mean authorities would carry their deficits. This Authority had budgeted prudently over past years to achieve a planned surplus in coming years however this approach will need to be varied if things change in the future and the Efficiency Plan is there to be changed.

The West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Tracy Onslow arrived at this point (2.15 pm)

Councillor Price commented that it was important to set out in the Plan how the Authority's planning and strategies had helped it achieve its current financial position especially with regard to issues such as its reserves.

Councillor Price further commented that the Fire Authority had been extremely active in addressing its major budgetary issues and the methodology used which included discussions, with both staff and Representative Bodies, regarding achieving the necessary savings had been appreciated by all concerned. There had been some difficult decisions for the Fire Authority to make and there had also been issues that were non-negotiables, for example there would be no closure of fire stations, no removal of appliances and no redundancies. Councillor Price commented that he believed that the savings identified were of a sustainable level and he would not like to think that the Fire Authority could take any more savings out of the Service.

The DPCC commented that Fire Authority's ideas are echoed in the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Police and Crime Plan. The DPCC asked if it would be possible for page 6 of the Efficiency Plan to be amended to read '...identify any opportunities to support **and work with** other public sector partners'.

Councillor Price proposed the amendment to page 6 of the Efficiency Plan which was to change the second paragraph on the page to read ‘...identify any opportunities to support **and work with** other public sector partners’. This was seconded by Councillor Hartin and agreed by the Fire Authority.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Jones and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority, having reviewed the Efficiency Plan, approve its submission to the Home Office with the inclusion of the amendment, as agreed above, to the second paragraph on page 6 of the report.

## 9 Integrated Risk Management Planning Projects Update

The Service has three significant Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) projects running through this year. IRMP 1 and 2 relate to new shift patterns, being introduced for our Wholetime Firefighters and Fire Control staff, and IRMP 3 relates to the redevelopment of our Telford Central fire station and training complex.

IRMP 1 and 2 aim to reduce our Wholetime staffing costs by up to £400k and to improve efficiency in our Fire Control function by up to £300k, by 2020. Negotiations on the required Collective Agreements are now at an advanced stage, with the representative bodies currently seeking feedback from their members on the two draft documents. If agreement is reached over the coming weeks, then the new shift systems should be in place for January 2017.

In relation to the IRMP 3 project, the Service is exploring all opportunities for joint collaboration with its partners, to ensure the Service secures the greatest public value from the significant investment that will be required for the site. Mindful of the new legal requirement for all blue-light services to collaborate, likely to come into force early next year through the new Police and Crime Bill, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Andy Johnson and Chief Superintendent Charles Hill (West Mercia Police), are exploring all possible opportunities for collaboration between the two services, not only in Telford, but also across the whole of the county.

This work sits as part of the wider facilities review being undertaken by all of the public services across the county, under the umbrella of the Shropshire Estates Partnership. Both services recognise this has introduced some delay into the Telford Central project, but are also mindful that a slight delay in the short-term, will hopefully result in significantly increased benefits to the public in the long-term. Once all options have been fully explored and approved by the two services, then the full requirements specification for the Telford Central development will be known and the project will be able to progress. This should see work start to progress on the project through the first half of 2017, with completion likely to be during 2019.

Members will receive a more detailed report on this collaboration work, and the impact on the Telford Central project timelines, at its December 2016 meeting.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer (T/ACFO) explained that officers were very appreciative of the constructive approach that had been taken to IRMP 1 and 2 by both staff and the Representative Bodies.

Councillor Price thanked officers for their work on the IRMP and commented that the Fire Authority echoed the appreciation of staff and Union involvement in the process. Councillor Carter agreed that the IRMP had included a great amount of co-operation and consultation and that Members had listened and been able to provide assurances.

It was proposed Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Price, and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the update given.

## **10 Details of Lives Saved and those Protected from Harm**

This paper highlighted the number of people, who had been protected from harm, or rescued by operational crews during the year 2015/16 and from August 2016. It also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service.

The CFO presented this paper and asked if any members had ideas as to how publicity regarding the information in it could with undertaken with Parish Councils, could they please discuss with the Service's Communications Officer.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the paper

The meeting closed at 2.50 pm.

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....