

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 9 July 2014, at 3.00 pm
at Service Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams, Austin, Mrs Barrow, Bennett, Mrs Bould, Carter, Cherrington, Hartin, Hurst-Knight, Dr Jones, Kiernan, Minnery (Vice-Chair), Thompson and West (Chair)

Officers

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery), Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Corporate Services), Treasurer, Head of Human Resources, Head of Resources, Head of Planning and Performance, Group Manager Prevention, Clerk to the Fire Authority, Corporate Support Manager and Executive Support Officer

1 Election of Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Dr Jones

That Councillor West be elected Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until immediately after the election of Chair at the next Annual Meeting.

There being no other nominations, Councillor West was duly elected Chair.

Upon taking the Chair, Councillor West thanked the Fire Authority for re-electing him and for the support of both Members and officers and commented that he was in a very privileged position to work with such a good Fire Authority.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Thompson and seconded by Councillor Dr Jones

That Councillor Carter be appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until immediately after the appointment of Vice-Chair at the next Annual Meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor West

That Councillor Minnery be appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until immediately after the appointment of Vice-Chair at the next Annual Meeting.

There being no other nominations, a vote was taken and with 9 votes for Councillor Minnery and 5 votes for Councillor Carter, Councillor Minnery was duly appointed Vice-Chair.

3a Vote of Thanks and Welcome

The Fire Authority gave a vote of thanks to Councillor Picken who left the Fire Authority in May and also to Councillor Cherrington, who would leave the Fire Authority later that month. A letter of thanks would be sent from the Chair of the Authority to both Councillors Picken and Cherrington.

The Chair then welcomed Councillor Austin, from Telford & Wrekin Council, back to the Fire Authority and also Rod Hammerton, who would join the Service in August as Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mellings, Price and Miss Reynolds.

5 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion of, or voting on, any matter, in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) and should leave the room prior to commencement of the debate.

Councillors Austin, Mrs Barrow, Hartin and Kiernan each declared a DPI in relation to item 14 on the agenda, as contributing members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The four Members concerned undertook to leave the room prior to item 14 being considered.

Councillor Bennett also declared a DPI in item 14, as he was in receipt of a Local Government pension. After consultation with the Clerk, it was agreed that Councillor Bennett would remain in the room for the discussion of item 14, as the issues being discussed did not apply to him.

6 Public Questions

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

7 Minutes

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 24 April 2014.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and, with Councillor Austin abstaining as he had not been present at the meeting, it was

Resolved that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 24 April 2014, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record



8 Audit and Performance Management Committee

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 12 June 2014.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 12 June 2014, be noted and the recommendation at item 7, as detailed below be agreed

Item 7 – Review of Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

Resolved that the Fire Authority re-affirm the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy without amendment

9 Strategy and Resources Committee

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 19 June 2014.

Councillor Hartin referred to item 7 on the minutes and commented that, whilst he had raised the European Working Time Directive at the meeting of Members of the European Parliament, he had nothing further to report on the issue.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 19 June 2014, be noted

10 Constitutional Issues

10a Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

This report asked the Fire Authority to agree both the composition of its Committees and the allocation of seats on its committees to political groups.

The Corporate Support Manager (CSM) presented this report and explained that Appendix A to the report set out the current allocation of seats to political groups, which would remain in place until 17 July 2014. On this date, Shropshire Council was likely to ratify an increase in the number of Conservative representatives on the Fire Authority from 7 to 8, at the expense of the one independent seat. This followed recent political changes at Shropshire Council. Appendix B, therefore, set out the likely allocation of seats from 17 July 2014, provided Shropshire Council made the anticipated change. If the Council made a different decision, it would be necessary to revisit the allocation of seats and to call an urgent meeting of the Fire Authority to agree the allocation.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority agree the Committee composition and allocation of seats to political groups, including that the political balance requirements should not apply to the Authority's Pension Panel, and specifically:

- a) The allocation, as proposed in Appendix A, for the period 10 to 17 July;
- b) The increase in membership of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel from 6 to 7 and the allocation, as proposed in Appendix B, with effect from 17 July 2014, provided Shropshire Council agreed to increase the Conservative membership of the Fire Authority from 7 to 8; and
- c) That the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group should include the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee

10b Committee Membership and Constitution

This report asked the Fire Authority to confirm appointments to committees and to the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission and to review the constitution of its committees.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree the appointment of Members to serve on committees, as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- b) Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to approve changes to committee membership, proposed by the appropriate Political Group Leader;
- c) Appoint Councillor West as its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission; and
- d) Agree the proposed amendments to the constitution of its various committees, as set out in Appendix B to the report

10c Review of Member Role Descriptions

The purpose of this report was to review and agree the Fire Authority's Member Role Descriptions.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Agree the Role Descriptions, detailed in the report and confirm that no amendments were required; and
- b) Authorise the Strategy and Resources Committee to review the Role Description of the Chair of the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group and make amendments, as necessary

10d Review of Scheme of Delegation to Officers and of Standing Orders

This report reviewed the Fire Authority's Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders and asked Members to consider and decide upon the amendments proposed.

In accordance with the Fire Authority's Standing Orders any amendments proposed would stand adjourned until the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the amendments, as proposed in the report, to:

- The Scheme of Delegation to Officers;
- Standing Orders for the Regulations of Proceedings and Business;
- Standing Orders relating to Contracts; and
- Financial Regulations Standing Orders

At this point, the Chair commented that, whilst committee membership would stay in a steady state for the foreseeable future, it might be necessary to revisit the issue, as there were some Fire Authority Members, who currently did not sit on any committees.

11 Statement of Accounts 2013/14

This report set out the key revenue issues, which had arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2013/14, and sought approval for use of the General Fund balance in 2014/15.

The Treasurer drew Members' attention to paragraph 4 of the report, which detailed the Authority's underspend for the year.

Councillor Hartin asked how the underspend total was made up. The Treasurer explained that the total of £870,000 was made up of £311,000 of net transfers to the General Fund, which had already been approved by the Fire Authority. The remaining £559,000 was made up of the variances, detailed on page 3 of the report.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Approve the addition of £153,000 to 2014/15 revenue budgets, for expenditure that has slipped from 2013/14; and
- b) Task officers to review the revenue budget and present recommendations for the use of the General Fund balance in 2014/15, to the September meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee

12 Strategic Planning Process Timetable 2015/16

This report outlined how the Service would continue to align service, financial and improvement planning, the result of which would culminate in the 2015/16 budget, the Financial Strategy 2015/20, Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015/20 and the publication, in April 2015, of the 2015/16 annual, one-year Service Plan.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report and agree the timetable set out in the appendix to the report

13 Public Value Review Update

This report provided a summary of progress against the agreed outcomes, as set out within the Fire Authority's Public Value review, undertaken in 2010.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery (ACFO-SD) highlighted page 3 of the report, which gave a high-level summary of the changes to the crewing of the Rescue Tender. A full report on this issue would be taken to the Audit and Performance Management Committee in September 2014.

With regard to the building maintenance budget, as detailed on page 5, the ACFO-SD reported that the Service had struggled to achieve the lower budget that was set. As a result, future funding levels for property maintenance were being considered and recommendations regarding this would be brought to the Authority in the next annual Asset Stewardship report.

Councillor Hartin expressed concern that agreed standards for buildings were not being met and that there were four Retained Duty System (RDS) stations that were not to a reasonable level of repair. He asked if anything could be done to address these deterioration issues now. The Head of Resources (HoR) explained that the deterioration was largely an effect of the lack of external maintenance, which would require increased expenditure in future to rectify. The HoR explained that the Fire Authority, as part of its capital programme, had reinstated the capital investment spend in order to address the issues at Albrighton, Baschurch, Clun and Hodnet RDS stations over the next two years.

Councillor Hartin proposed that the Fire Authority agree to pull forward the capital spend on RDS station refurbishment to remedy the situation as soon as is practicable. The Treasurer advised that, given the Authority's financial situation as outlined in item 11 on the agenda for the meeting, this could be done. Councillor Dr Jones seconded Councillor Hartin's proposal and it was

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority agree to pull forward the capital spend on RDS station refurbishment

Councillor Minnery commented that, when the Public Value Review began in 2010, the Fire Authority thought it would be doing well, if it managed to achieve three-quarters of the proposed reductions.

In fact, the Authority had achieved over and above this and appreciation for this achievement should be given to Members, employees and the Unions for enabling the 'job to be done'. Councillor West echoed these comments and said that the Fire Authority was now in a relatively stable position, from which it was able to plan ahead.

Councillor Dr Jones commented that it was reassuring to see the summary report on the effect of the changes to the rescue tender and that she was looking forward to receiving the full report in September.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note progress to date

At this point (3.45 pm), Councillors Austin, Mrs Barrow, Hartin and Kiernan left the meeting room, as they had declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in agenda item 14.

14 Local Government Pension Scheme Employer Discretions Statement of Policy

This report informed the Fire Authority of the amendments to the Local Government Pensions Scheme. It recommended decisions on the required discretions and also policies under each discretion to facilitate effective implementation of those decisions.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Hurst-Knight, and, with Councillor Bennett abstaining as he had declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item, it was

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the outcome of the review of the current Statement of Policy for the Local Government Pensions Scheme; and
- b) Approve the table of discretions and proposed policies for the Local Government Pensions Scheme, as shown in the Statement of Policy at Appendix B

At this point (3.50 pm), Councillors Austin, Mrs Barrow, Hartin and Kiernan returned to the meeting room.

15 Corporate Risk Management Annual Report

This report informed Members about the corporate level risk management work that had been undertaken during the previous twelve months.

Councillor Adams referred to the appendix to the report, which detailed the Corporate Risk Register, and asked why Risk ID 4 had so many senior officers allocated to it. The Planning and Programme Manager explained that the risk related to a number of major contracts, for which the individual officers named were responsible.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the report

16 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 2013/14 and from April to June 2014. It also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service.

Councillor Adams acknowledged that this was a new report and asked that, once it was possible to do so, it be amended to include comparisons between data for full years. The Group Manager Prevention undertook to do this from April 2015 onwards.

The Chair commented that it was a very good report, which gave an indication that the Service was doing well.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the paper

17 Partnership Working

This report provided Members with an overview of the partnership working being undertaken by the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Group Manager Prevention (GMP) drew Members' attention to the new work that was being undertaken with Telford & Wrekin Council and Health Visitor Groups. The GMP also highlighted the Fire Emergency Support Service vehicle partnership with the British Red Cross, which had become a recognised example of best practice in the West Mercia region, and the work undertaken with the Bronze Level Tasking Groups, particularly the Harlescott Day of Action.

Councillor Dr Jones thanked the GMP for the report, which was very interesting for Members.

Councillor Hartin referred to work with housing partnerships, as detailed on page 2 of the report, and asked if the scheme that had been undertaken with Severnside Housing would be rolled out to other providers. The GMP explained that local community fire safety representatives had been tasked with forming relationships with housing associations, such as Wrekin Housing Trust.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the report



18 Local Government Act 1972

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Carter, 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 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3

19 Exempt Minutes (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)

Members received the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 24 April 2014.

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Bennett and, with Councillor Austin abstaining as he had not been present at the meeting, it was

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 24 April 2014, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

At this point the meeting reverted to open session.

20 Election of Chairs and Appointment of Vice-Chairs to Committees

Members of Committees were asked to elect a Chair and appoint a Vice-Chair, to hold office until the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting in July 2015.

Strategy and Resources Committee

Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery and seconded by Councillor Hartin that Councillor Carter be elected Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Carter was duly elected Chair.

Vice Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Barrow and seconded by Councillor Carter that Councillor Hartin be appointed Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Hartin was duly appointed Vice-Chair.

Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group

Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery and seconded by Councillor Dr Jones that Councillor Hartin be elected Chair of the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Hartin was duly elected Chair.

Vice Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Dr Jones that Councillor Price be appointed Vice-Chair of the Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Price was duly appointed Vice-Chair.

Audit and Performance Management Committee

Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Hurst-Knight and seconded by Councillor Bennett that Councillor Dr Jones be elected Chair of the Audit and Performance Management Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Dr Jones was duly elected Chair.

Vice Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones and seconded by Councillor Bennett that Councillor Mellings be appointed Vice-Chair of the Audit and Performance Management Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Mellings was duly appointed Vice-Chair.

Standards and Human Resources Committee

Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Barrow and seconded by Councillor Mrs Bould that Councillor Adams be elected Chair of the Standards and Human Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Adams was duly elected Chair.

Vice Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Adams and seconded by Councillor Kiernan that Councillor Mrs Barrow be appointed Vice-Chair of the Standards and Human Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Mrs Barrow was duly appointed Vice-Chair.

Brigade Managers' Employment Panel

Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery and seconded by Councillor Hartin that Councillor West be elected Chair of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel.

There being no other nominations, Councillor West was duly elected Chair.

Pensions Panel

The members of the Pensions Panel agreed that the Chair of the Pensions Panel would be elected on an ad-hoc basis.

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....