

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held in the Oak Room, Headquarters, Shrewsbury
on Wednesday, 14 February 2018, at 2.00 pm**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams, Carter (Chair), Dee, Hartin, Hosken, Mellings, Milner, Murray, Pardy, Phillips, Price, Roberts (Vice-Chair), Sahota and Wynn

Officers

| | | |
|------------------|--|-------|
| Rod Hammerton | Chief Fire Officer | CFO |
| Andy Johnson | Deputy Chief Fire Officer | DCFO |
| Dave Myers | Assistant Chief Fire Officer | ACFO |
| Jonathan Eatough | Clerk to the Fire Authority | Clerk |
| Joanne Coadey | Head of Finance | HoF |
| John Harrison | Company Manager | CM |
| Andrew Kelcey | Head of Resources | HoR |
| Germaine Worker | Head of Human Resources and Administration | HHRA |
| Lynn Ince | Executive Support Officer | ESO |
| Natalie Barker | Executive Support Team Supervisor | ESTS |

External Bodies

Tracy Onslow West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner DPCC

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Jones, Minnery and Pinter and James Walton, Treasurer.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillors Hartin, Hosken, Mellings and Roberts declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items 10 and 11 as Directors of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd.

It was agreed that the Members concerned, together with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, who is also a Director of the Company, would leave the meeting for items 10 and 11.

3 Public Questions

None

4 Non-Exempt Minutes

Resolved that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 13 December 2017, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

5 Audit and Performance Management Committee Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 7 December 2017, be noted and the recommendation at item 7, as given below, be agreed.

Item 7 – Internal Audit Plan from 2018/19

Resolved that the Fire Authority approve the audit plan for 2018/19 as set out in the report.

6 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 1 February 2018, be noted and the recommendations at items 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, as given below, be agreed.

Item 5 - Financial Performance to December 2017

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve virements to the revenue budget, where requested; and
- c) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2017/18.

Item 7 - Capital Programmes 2018/19 to 2022/23 and Prudential Guidelines

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- b) Approve the Prudential Indicators and the Treasury Strategy for 2018/19;
- c) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision 2018/19; and
- d) Note the review of the Treasury Management Practices and Main Principles for 2018/19.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree:

- a) The reserves as set out in the appendix to the report;
- b) The Treasurer's assurances covering the robustness of the 2018/19 budget and adequacy of the reserves; and
- c) That a risk based review of reserves be undertaken.

Item 9 – Officers Car Capital Purchase and Fleet Environmental Improvements

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Having noted that the Strategy and Resources Committee have considered the business and financial benefits associated with purchase of future officer cars, agree the establishment of an ongoing capital scheme for provision and replacement;
- b) Note that the Strategy and Resources Committee have considered the merits of the introduction of electric and petrol-electric hybrid cars in to the Service's fleet; and
- c) Note the proposed installation of charging points, initially at Shrewsbury.

Item 10 – National Framework Consultation

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the draft response to the National Framework Consultation, as recommended to it by the Strategy and Resources Committee.

7 Exclusion of Press and Public

Members queried whether the DPCC should remain in the meeting for the exempt items. On the advice of the Clerk, the Chair stated that, at his discretion, he was happy for the DPCC to remain in the meeting as there appeared to be no conflict of interests in relation to the items on the agenda.

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

8 Capital Programmes from 2018/19 (Paragraph 3)

The Fire Authority received the paper on Capital Programmes from 2018/19 (the appendix to paper 6b on this agenda).

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

- a) Confirm the 2018/19 onward programmes, set out in exempt paper 8, as part of its final precept deliberations

9 Officers Car Capital Purchase and Fleet Environmental Improvements (Paragraph 3)

The Fire Authority received the exempt Appendix to report 6d on this agenda – Officers Car Capital Purchase and Fleet Environmental Improvements.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note exempt Appendix C to report 6d – Officers Car Capital Purchase and Fleet Environmental Improvements.

Councillors Hartin, Hosken, Mellings and Roberts and the DCFO left the meeting at this point (2.15 pm)

10 Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 3)

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 13 December 2017, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd (Paragraph 3)

This report set out further information as requested by the Fire Authority at its December 2017 meeting.

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority agree that Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd be placed in hibernation adding approximately £820 to the total net liability each and every year in which no trading is carried out and in doing so provide the required 'going concern statement'

The meeting reverted to open session at this point (2.25 pm) and Councillors Hartin, Hosken, Mellings and Roberts and the DCFO returned to the meeting.

12 Revenue Budget 2018/19

This report incorporated the recommendations made by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 1 February 2018, in relation to the revenue budget for 2018/19. The report also confirmed the use of 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: 2018/19 Precept.

The HoF presented the two reports and advised that the business rates income figures had been confirmed. The section 31 grant in relation to national non-domestic rates forms had been confirmed as £231k with the council tax collection funds also being confirmed at £304k. This means that the Fire Authority has received circa £500k more in one-off gains for 2018/19. The HoF also confirmed that the Government had approved the financial settlement on 7 February 2018 and that the Rural Services grant for this authority had been increased.

The HoF advised that the Strategy and Resources Committee had debated both options for the increase in precept level and the 1.99% precept increase was exemplified in the appendix to the report. The surpluses, with a 2.99% increase, are quite high but the money would be used to fund the Capital Programme and the additional capital scheme for officers' cars which was approved earlier in the meeting.

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority

- a) approve a revenue budget for 2018/19 and a forward financial projection to 2019/20, as set out in section 6 of the report; and
- b) delegate any necessary amendments to the revenue budget to the Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Authority.

13 Revenue Budget: 2018/19 Precept

This report sought Fire Authority approval to a budget for 2018/19; Council Tax levels for 2018/19; and precepts on billing authorities and related matters.

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority approve:

- a) That a net budget requirement be set at £21,641,328 (calculated in accordance with the provisions of Section 43(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992);
- b) A total precept of £14,445,463 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 £97.34;
- 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 | 2018/19 Council Tax £ p |
|------|-------------------------------|
| A | 64.89 |
| B | 75.71 |
| C | 86.52 |
| D | 97.34 |
| E | 118.97 |
| F | 140.60 |
| G | 162.23 |
| H | 194.68 |

- ii) The amount calculated (in accordance with Section 48 of the 1992 Act) as payable by billing authorities for 2018/19, as follows:

| Council | Precept £ |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Shropshire Council | 10,619,365 |
| Borough of Telford & Wrekin Council | 4,826,098 |
| | <hr/> 15,445,463 <hr/> |

- 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; and
- g) Approve the schedule of reserves and provisions at Appendix B.

14 Annual Service Plan 2017/18

This report set out proposals for the Service's Annual Plan 2018/19.

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree the proposed format of the Annual Plan 2018/19;
- 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 Plan; and
- c) Delegate the setting of the Service Targets to its Strategy and Resources Committee in March.

15 Annual Review of Charges for Special Services 2018/19

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the proposed charges for special services to be applied from 1 April 2018.

16 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.

The HHRA presented the report and advised that the Statement will be published by 31 March 2018.

Members made the observation that the two separate reports at agenda items 16 and 17 concerning the Pay Police Statement and the Gender Pay Gap could be combined in future years. The HHRA undertook to look at this.

Referring to the table on page 9 of the report, Members queried why the pension contribution for the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) had increased from 10.50% to 16%. The CFO explained that the increase was due to the new ACFO being in a different pension scheme with higher levels of contributions.

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

17 Gender Pay Gap Report

This report explained Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Information Regulations 2017) to publish an annual Gender Pay Gap report and the associated report.

Members commented that this was a very welcome report and that it was good to see that the Service taking action to address issues related to the gender pay gap.

Members asked if the Service was confident that it was paying equal pay for work of equal value. The HHRA confirmed that it was, as it uses National Joint Council scales. Members also queried the Salary Quartile bands, as shown in the table on page 4 of the report, where the lower band starts at £4.00 and asked if anybody in the Service was being paid this. The HHRA explained that this is the pay rate for apprentices. The Service pays the national minimum wage rate to apprentices rather than the apprentice rate.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report for publishing on the Service's website and the Government website: www.gov.co.uk

The meeting closed at 2.45 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....