

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held on Wednesday, 9 October 2019, at 2.00 pm  
in the Oak Room, Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

## **Present**

### **Members**

Councillors Adams, Carter (Chair), Dee, Hartin, Mellings (Vice-Chair), Middleton, Milner, Minnery, Sahota, Thompson and Wynn

### **Officers**

Rod Hammerton	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Andy Johnson	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	DCFO
Jonathan Eatough	Clerk and Monitoring Officer	Clerk
James Walton	Treasurer	
Germaine Worker	Head of Human Resources and Administration	HHRA
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO

### **External Bodies**

Tracy Onslow	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner	DPCC
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## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Blundell, Phillips and Price. Councillor Pardy did not attend the meeting.

## **2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Councillors Hartin and Mellings declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda as they are Directors of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd (SFRMS). They and the DCFO, whom also sits on the SFRMS Board of Directors as a non-voting member, undertook to remain in the meeting whilst the paper was introduced and any questions were put to the Board and would leave the meeting for the discussion of, and voting on, the paper.

## **3 Public Questions**

None

## **4 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting, held on 26 June 2019, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Chair varied the order of the agenda to allow items 8 and 9 to be considered at this point.

## **8 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd**

This report provided an update on the current status of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd (SFRMS) and gave a recommendation that the company should now be formally closed down.

The DCFO presented this report and talked through the development of the company which had aided the Service's reduction from four to three Area Managers amongst other things. Changes within the company and the Service's shift in focus to build capacity and resilience through collaboration have meant that there has been very little spare capacity within SFRS to support the company since 2017. The company was, therefore, put into hibernation by the Board of Directors in May 2017 and has remained dormant since then. This decision did reduce the company's operational costs, but its offset costs remain outstanding.

The Fire Authority's Auditors have advised that the outstanding debt should be written off as there are no plans for SFRMS to restart trading in the future. The Board of Directors' opinion is that it is inappropriate for the Authority to invest in the company when there is a need to focus on other issues such as the Strategic Fire Alliance. The recommended course of action is therefore for the debt that is outstanding from the company to be written off by the Fire Authority.

This will mean that the company will need to be dissolved and struck off the register of companies. This is known as a voluntary strike-off and the estimated cost of this process is £400 plus VAT. There are no employees and the only creditor is the Fire Authority. Similarly, the Fire Authority is the company's only stakeholder and there is no pension fund associated with the company.

Councillors Hartin and Mellings and the DCFO left the meeting at this point (2.20 pm)

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the current status and achievements of SFRMS;
- b) Approve that the outstanding recharge costs from SFRMS to Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority be written off; and
- c) Having considered the recommendation from members of the SFRMS Board, agree that the company should now be formally closed.

Councillors Hartin and Mellings and the DCFO returned to the meeting at this point (2.22 pm)

## **9 Strategic Fire Alliance – Alliance Agreement and Projects Update**

This report updated Members on progress in preparing priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services.

The CFO presented this report and advised that it provided an update on the four core projects that are being undertaken by the Fire Alliance. He also drew the Authority's attention to the Fire Alliance Agreement, attached at the Appendix to the report. The Authority is asked to approve the Agreement which has been drawn up by both Authorities' Legal Teams and which is a formal recognition of the existing arrangement that the Fire Alliance is working to.

The CFO referred Members to paragraph 6.7 of the Agreement which sets out the overall method of cost apportionment for each of the four key project areas: Control, ICT, Integrated Risk Management Planning and Procurement. Under the agreement, cost apportionment is a two-stage process with both authorities entering into feasibility studies and one-off implementation projects on an equitable basis and then further funding of projects being undertaken jointly based on appropriate measures that are agreed by both Authorities e.g. levels of usage or population size. This provides a formal agreement of the detail and costing of projects as required under the Police and Crime Act.

The CFO advised that it almost acts as a 'pre-nuptial' agreement, in that whilst both Authorities are entering into the Alliance on a strong partnership basis, the Agreement will aid the understanding of the mechanisms that brought both parties together, should there a split in the future.

The Clerk commented that the Agreement gives reassurance to the Authority as it ensures that risks are understood and managed. He also advised that the final part of the process is for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority to consider and approve the Agreement at its meeting next week.

Members expressed their pleasure that the Alliance is starting to come to fruition but urged that steps are taken to ensure that this is not viewed by the public as a complete takeover when it is an alliance to the benefit of the communities that are served by both Fire and Rescue Authorities.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the report and the progress it details; and
- b) Approve the draft Fire Alliance Agreement, as attached at the Appendix to the report.

The Chair left the meeting at this point (2.30 pm) and the Vice-Chair took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

## **5 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee Minutes**

### **5a 18 July 2019**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting, held on 18 July 2019, be noted and that the recommendation at item 12, as given below, be agreed

### **Item 12 – Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy as recommended by the Committee.

## **5b 18 September 2019**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting, held on 18 September 2019, be noted and that the recommendations at item 7, as given below, be agreed.

### **Item 7 – Annual Review 2018/19**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the draft Annual Review 2018/19.

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

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 12 September 2019, be noted and the recommendations at item 7, as given below, be agreed.

### **Item 7 – Financial Performance to July 2019**

**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 2018/19.

## **7 Meeting Schedule 2020**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the draft Meeting Schedule for 2020.

The meeting closed at 2.40 pm.

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....