

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Strategy and Resources Committee
held in the Oak Room at Headquarters, Shrewsbury
on Thursday, 10 September 2015 at 2.00 pm**

Present

Members

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Carter, Hartin (Vice-Chair), Turley, West and Wynn

Officers

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Head of Service Delivery Transformation, Head of Finance, Planning and Performance Manager and Executive Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Roberts had given his apologies for absence. Councillor Hartin, as Vice-Chair of the Committee, therefore chaired the meeting.

The Treasurer had also given his apologies for absence.

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 the commencement of the debate on that matter.

No Member declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

3 Minutes

1 April 2015

At its meeting on 16 July 2015, Members were unable to agree the minutes of the Committee meeting, held on 1 April 2015, because of a lack of quorum (four Members) to consider this item. Councillors Barrow, Carter, Hartin and West had since confirmed that those minutes represented a true record of the meeting.

Members were, therefore, asked to agree that the minutes of Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 1 April 2015, be signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 1 April 2015, be signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

16 July 2015

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 16 July 2015.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 16 July 2015, 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 Financial Performance to July 2015

This report provided information on the financial performance of the Service, and sought approval for action where necessary.

The Head of Finance (HoF) talked through the table on page 2 of the report, which set out the variances identified so far in the 2015/16 budget.

Councillor Wynn referred to page 4 of the report and asked if the Fire Authority's current investments were safe. The HoF explained that the Fire Authority used approved counter-parties and was more cautious in its investments than Shropshire Council. Reassurance about investments was provided by the Treasury Advisor to the Council.

Councillor Mrs Barrow referred to page 2 of the report and asked if it was likely the Area Manager Prevention post would be deleted from the establishment. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) explained that there had been a re-organisation from 4 to 3 Area Manager posts and that, ultimately, the Service would look to delete this post. He also reassured Members that the vacant post was not affecting the operational aspect of the Service.

Councillor Carter referred to page 4 of the report and asked if there was any particular reason why the Service had invested with Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Head of Finance undertook to obtain further information on the Fire Authority's investment strategy from the Treasurer and to circulate this to Members.

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

Resolved that the Committee recommend 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 2015/16

6 Grant of Exemption to Standing Orders

In accordance with Section D of the Fire Authority's Standing Orders relating to Contracts, an exemption from the requirement to obtain competitive tenders for Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) consulting services, at a cost of £37,050, had been agreed. The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, after consultation with the Chair, granted the exemption in August 2015 on the basis that the company concerned, Process Evolution Consultancy, represented the best option for the Service.

The purpose of the exemption was to contract Process Evolution to provide a technical review and evaluation of the potential models for changes in working patterns and crewing models for Fire Control and wholetime stations as part of the IRMP Action Plan. The exemption was requested on the basis that Process Evolution had already undertaken the foundation work for this research, as they had evaluated the options for change in fire cover, identified in the Service's draft IRMP, and, therefore, had an existing detailed knowledge of the Service. There was also a very limited market for the provision of this type of Service.

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

Resolved that the Committee note the granting of the exemption

7 Corporate Risk Management Summary

This report was the latest of the regular risk management summary reports to the Strategy and Resources Committee. The progress reported related to that achieved since the last Committee update in July 2015.

The Planning and Performance Manager (PPM) presented the report and advised Members that there was an error in the Appendix at Risk ID 6 – Local Authority Controlled Company. The owner of this risk should be Andy Johnson not Martin Timmis.

The CFO referred to Risk ID 7 – Fire Industries Association challenge and gave a brief outline of the background to the risk. The CFO advised that he had received a letter from the Chief Fire Officers Association, outlining a possible solution to this issue. The Company Manager and the Corporate Support Manager would be attending a meeting on 15 September, at which further guidance would be given on the proposed solution.

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

Resolved that the Committee note the report

8 Capital Update on Activity and Finance

This report provided an overview of all of the capital schemes within the Service and their current status. The report also requested the Committee to recommend to the Fire Authority variations in the capital schemes.

The PPM presented this report and drew Members' attention to page 2 of the report, which set out the reasons for the proposed amendments to the Tweedale Heating System and the Command and Control Pods and Vehicles schemes.

Councillor Wynn asked when the Whitchurch training tower was likely to be finished. The CFO advised that he could confirm that the old tower had been taken down and that, whilst he did not know the scheduled completion date, he would endeavour to provide further detail to Members. He added that officers had met with West Mercia Police with regard to co-location of police on fire stations and design possibilities were being investigated.

Councillor Hartin referred to the Command and Control Pods and Vehicles scheme, for which the budget had now tripled, and asked how realistic the original budget had been. The CFO explained that the proposed vehicle would have more complex systems and would offer more flexibility, which would lead to savings. Councillor Hartin asked for an estimate of how much the savings would be. The CFO did not know, as the project was still in the early stages of scoping.

Councillor Hartin asked for confirmation that continuing with the original plan would not have given sufficient interoperability. The CFO explained that the proposed vehicles would be more flexible resources. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) added that with regard to communications technology, if the Service had the same vehicle but with different specifications, there could be issues with communications. Councillor Hartin commented that he did not wish Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to benefit from this change at the expense of this Service. The ACFO advised that the three vehicles would provide operational advantages to both Services.

Councillor Hartin asked about the timescale for the Telford Central improvements. The Head of Service Delivery Transformation explained that a report would be brought to the Fire Authority in April or June 2016, setting out options for the site. Following the Fire Authority's decision, the project would start to move into the design stage with a view to the works being completed in a similar timeframe to the Headquarters redevelopment.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Committee:

- a) Note the progress so far on current schemes; and
- b) Approve and recommend to the Fire Authority variations to the capital schemes, as set out in section 5 of the report, namely:
 - Cancel the heating system at Tweedale scheme; and
 - Increase the command and control pods and vehicles scheme from £50k to £150k

9 Local Government Act 1972

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

Resolved that the public and press be excluded for the following agenda item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined by the provisions of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, by virtue of paragraph 3

10 Capital Update on Activity and Finance (Paragraph 3)

The Committee received Appendix B to report 8 – Capital Update on Activity and Finance, which was to be considered in closed session, as it contained exempt information.

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

Resolved that the Committee note exempt Appendix B to report 8

The meeting closed at 2.38 pm.

These minutes were agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee and signed as a correct record by the:

Chair.....

on

Date.....