

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Standards and Human Resources Committee
held on Tuesday, 17 March 2015 at 2.00 pm
in the Oak Room, Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams (Chair), Mrs Bould, Mellings, Kiernan and Price

Officers

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Corporate Support Manager,
Temporary Equality and Diversity Officer and Temporary Executive Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Barrow and Austin, Independent Person, Mr Humphries, and the Human Resources Manager.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The Chair reminded Members that they must not participate in the discussion 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 any such matter.

Councillors Kiernan and Mellings declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 9 – Ethical Framework Matters – in that they were the subjects of the request for a dispensation to be considered by the Committee.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 6 November 2014.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 6 November 2014, be agreed and signed as a correct record

4 Public Questions

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

5 Committee Constitution and Training Needs

This report brought the constitution of the Standards and Human Resources Committee to its Members for review. The report also asked Members to consider whether there was any training or development, which should be undertaken by the Committee in order to fulfil its role.

Councillor Price asked whether dyslexia training would be repeated, as he had been unable to attend the previous session. He was assured that there would be another session, to which Members would be invited.

Councillor Adams raised the question of imbalance in the age profile in the Service and welcomed the fact that operational staff were being seconded from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported that there were 15 secondees in post until December 2015. A paper would be submitted to the Management Team the following week concerning confirmation of a number of posts and other recruitment activity.

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

Resolved that the Committee, having reviewed the constitution of the Standards and Human Resources Committee:

- a) Had no recommendations for the Fire Authority regarding changes required to the constitution; and
- b) Agree that any training or development to be undertaken by the Committee in order to fulfil its role would be addressed at a later date, noting that dyslexia training was to be included in the Member Development activity for 2015/16

6 Committee Work Plan 2015/16

This report reviewed progress against the 2014/15 Work Plan for the Standards and Human Resources Committee and put forward a 2015/16 Work Plan for the Committee's consideration and approval by Members.

Members noted that all actions in the 2014/15 Work Plan had been completed or were on the agenda for this meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Kiernan, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bould and

Resolved that Members agree the proposed 2015/16 Work Plan

7 Member Development

This report updated the Committee on Member development activity over the past year and proposed training and development activity for the year April 2015 to March 2016.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported that, as requested by Members, a further dyslexia session would be included in the 2015/16 Development Programme. In addition, the postponed session on Service Transformation would be rearranged.

It had not yet been possible to organise a fire pensions update for Members but officers would look to run a session to correspond with the establishment of the new Pension Boards.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Bould, seconded by Councillor Kiernan and

Resolved that Members note the backward-looking report and agree the proposed training and development activity for the year April 2015 to March 2016, with the addition of training in dyslexia awareness

8 Review of Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality

This report asked the Standards and Human Resources Committee to review the Fire Authority's Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality and to make recommendations to the Authority regarding any changes to be made.

It was noted that officers proposed the following minor amendments:

- At the final bullet point on page 2, deletion of 'Leonardo'; and
- In the first two rows of Appendices A and B, insertion of 'of recipient'.

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

Resolved that the Committee, having reviewed the Draft Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality, recommend the Protocol to the Fire Authority with the above minor amendments

9 Ethical Framework Matters

This paper reported on Code of Conduct complaints, provided details of dispensations, granted to Members, for the period 2014/15, and requested the Committee to renew the dispensation previously granted to members of the board of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd.

The Corporate Support Manager advised the Committee that Councillors Kiernan and Mellings would have to leave the meeting at this point, as they were the subjects of the dispensation request contained within the report. The meeting would then become inquorate.

In the light of this, it was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bould and

Resolved that this item be deferred to a meeting to be held prior to the next Fire Authority meeting on 29 April, when enough Members of the Committee should be present to form a quorum

10 Progress on Implementation of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan

This report updated Members on changes in the structure of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan and progress on the main actions identified in the Plan from March 2014 to March 2015.

The Committee noted that the Equality and Diversity Policy would be published in the near future and that the Women's Taster Days had been successful, with the appointment of five female Retained Duty System firefighters. The next phase was to hold Black and Minority Ethnic taster sessions for under-represented communities.

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

Resolved that the report be noted

11 Equality Monitoring Statistics

This report provided an overview of the Service's Equality Monitoring Statistics.

It was noted that the categories had been simplified and that the need for research with South Asian communities on attitudes to working as a firefighter and fire safety had been identified, with a research project being implemented.

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

Resolved that the report be noted

12 Reasonable Adjustments Update

The report provided an overview of the reasonable adjustments made to support employees in their work roles.

Members stressed the importance of the process and the value to staff and the organisation. It was noted that the provision of reasonable adjustments was a statutory obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and that a video presentation was currently being produced to raise awareness amongst staff.

Assistance with funding was currently given by Access to Work in the region of 58% towards the costs. If this funding were to decrease or stop, the Service would need to take the costs on board.

It was proposed by Councillor Kiernan, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bould and

Resolved that the report be noted

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer left the meeting at this point.

13 Amendments to Brigade Manager Roles and Responsibilities arising from the Public Value Programme

This report informed the Committee of changes to the Brigade Manager Team, which had resulted from implementation of the Public Value Programme.

The Committee noted the changes in relation to the roles of the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and, particularly, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the arrangements in place for Gold Command of incidents.

Councillor Mellings wished to raise some questions, particularly in respect of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

As the responses were likely to relate to the individual rather than the role, the Corporate Support Manager advised that these should be dealt with in closed session.

14 Local Government Act 1972

In light of the above the Chair asked whether, under the Local Government Act 1972, the Committee agreed that the public and press be excluded from the meeting room.

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

Resolved that, under the Local Government Act 1972, 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 1

14 Amendments to Brigade Manager Roles and Responsibilities arising from the Public Value Programme

In response to Councillor Mellings' questions regarding training for the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, the Chief Fire Officer outlined what training and development she had received in order to fulfil her new role and specifically that of Gold Command.

The Committee asked whether the Chief Fire Officer would be communicating these arrangements more widely throughout the Brigade and was advised that this was under consideration.

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

Resolved that the report be noted

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.

Chair.....

Date.....