

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 29 April 2015, at 3.00 pm
at Service Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams, Mrs Barrow, Carter, Hartin, Hurst-Knight, Dr Jones, Kiernan, Mellings, Minnery (Vice-Chair), Price, Miss Reynolds, Roberts, Thompson, West (Chair) and Wynn

Officers

Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Head of Area Command, Head of Finance, Treasurer, Clerk to the Fire Authority and Executive Support Officer

The Chair gave a vote of thanks to Councillors Austin and Mrs Bould, who were not standing for re-election in the forthcoming Telford & Wrekin Council elections.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Austin and Mrs Bould.

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 should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillors Barrow, Hartin, Kiernan, Mellings and Minnery declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 6b – Request for Dispensation, as Directors of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd., who had made the request for the dispensation. They undertook to leave the meeting room when item 6b was debated and voted on.

Councillor Price declared an interest in item 10 as a member of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

3 Non-Exempt Minutes

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 25 February 2015.

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Minnery, and, with Councillor Reynolds abstaining, as she had not been present at the meeting, it was

Resolved that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 25 February 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 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 1 April 2015 and considered the recommendation at item 6 concerning the Committee Terms of Reference.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 1 April 2015, be noted and that the recommendation at item 6, as given below, be agreed

Item 6 – Committee Terms of Reference

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the proposed amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference

6 Standards and Human Resources Committee Minutes

6a Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 17 March 2015, and considered the recommendation at item 8.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 17 March 2015, be noted and that the recommendation at item 8, as given below, be agreed

Item 8 – Review of Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the draft Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Kiernan, Mellings and Minnery left the meeting at this point (3.10 pm).

6b Request for Dispensation

This report asked the Fire Authority to delegate authority to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Standards and Human Resources Committee, to consider and decide upon a request for a dispensation, made by the Directors of the Board of Fire Authority controlled company, Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Limited.

The Clerk advised that he wished to put forward a simplified recommendation to read 'that the Fire Authority consider and decide upon a request for dispensation, made by the Directors of the Board of the Fire Authority controlled company Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd.'

The Clerk added that there would be circumstances where, notwithstanding the dispensation, it would be inappropriate for the Members concerned to take part in the discussion of certain items, for example the company accounts. On these occasions, the Clerk would give those Members separate advice appropriate to the circumstances.

The amended recommendation was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Adams, and it was

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the request for a dispensation, made by the Directors of the Board of the Fire Authority controlled company, Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Kiernan, Mellings and Minnery returned to the meeting room at this point (3.13 pm).

7 Fire Authority Work Plan 2015/16

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

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note progress made against the Fire Authority 2014/15 Work Plan, as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report; and
- b) Approve the 2015/16 Work Plan (attached at the appendix to the report) without amendment

8 Financial Performance to March 2015

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

The Head of Finance (HoF) drew Members' attention to the table on page 2 of the report, which set out the revenue budget position up to March 2015.

Councillor Hartin referred to the table on page 2 and asked what the impact of the prevention underspend had been and also for further details regarding the £60k overspend on helmets.

The Head of Area Command (HoAC) responded that the underspend was partly due to the Prevention Department's activities being on an annual calendar, which enabled reuse of literature and resources for campaigns. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) added that a change of personnel in Community Fire Safety had led to vacancies and that a number of initiatives were being used to address this, including the recruitment of one person.

With regard to helmet replacement, the CFO explained that the Service was changing from its current stock of helmets. This was an anomaly and expenditure would be evened out by the use of the Operational Kit Reserve.

Councillor Price asked if Members could be given a demonstration of the new helmets, so they could see the improvements. The CFO undertook to provide this at the next Fire Authority meeting.

Councillor Carter referred to a recent report in the press regarding helmets and asked if the purchase had been carried out centrally. The CFO responded that the Service did monitor joint procurement but one of the major issues was timing. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) explained that he was part of the regional meeting, which looked at projected contract spends and tried to achieve some alignment in this area.

Councillor Carter referred to the investments, set out on page 5 of the report, and, whilst not questioning the ability of officers, raised concerns about the investment with Handelsbanken due to European Union issues. The HoF explained that Service operated with counterparties and, through Shropshire Council, invested only with government backed triple A rated authorities.

Councillor Roberts and Councillor Wynn both raised concerns about how safe it was to invest with councils and how often the investments were reviewed. The Treasurer explained that Shropshire Council's advisors reviewed the investments daily.

Councillor Hartin asked for an update on spare capacity within the Wide Area Network (WAN). The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) explained that the intention was still to pursue this but progress had so far been slow. An update would be provided to Members as soon as possible.

Councillor Adams referred to the Department for Communities and Local Government Control grant, set out on page 3 of the report, and asked if the areas where grant had been expended were up and running and delivering. The CFO confirmed that this was the case.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve virements to the revenue budget, where requested;
- c) Approve the use of government grant for the Fire Control Project; and
- d) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2014/15

9 Service Plan 2015/20 and Annual Plan 2015/16

This report presented the completed five-year Service Plan for the period 2015/20 and the new Annual Plan for 2015/16.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority approve:

- a) The Service Plan 2015/20; and
- b) The Annual Plan 2015/16

10 Firefighters' Pension Scheme Delegations

This report identified the discretionary powers of the Fire Authority under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015. The report included recommendations relating to the delegation of decision-making powers and also put forward some suggestions for general policies to facilitate the effective implementation of those decisions and powers.

Councillor Hartin asked if there had been any queries regarding transfers following the recent changes to pension regulations. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that there have been some enquiries regarding freedoms and that the advice given to the individuals concerned had been to seek independent professional financial advice.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority approve the proposals for:

- a) Delegation of powers under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (as set out at Appendix A to the report); and
- b) Policy in relation to certain rules contained within the Scheme (as set out at Appendix B to the report)

11 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 years 2013/14 and 2014/15. It also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service.

Councillor Adams asked if the information had been used for publicity. The CFO replied that this was the intention.

The Chair referred to the recent animal rescue publicity and assured the Fire Authority that, where possible, the CFO would, in future, notify Members before publicity appeared.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the report

12 Local Government Act 1972

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

Resolved that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting room for the following item on the grounds that it 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

13 Exempt Minutes (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)

Members received the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 25 February 2015.

It was proposed by Councillor Roberts, seconded by Councillor Minnery, and, with Councillor Reynolds abstaining, as she had not been present at the meeting, it was

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 25 February 2015, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

These minutes were agreed by the Fire Authority and signed as a correct record by the:

Chair.....

on

Date.....