

**Non-Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held at Service Headquarters, Shrewsbury
on Tuesday, 3 May 2016, at 2.00 pm**

Present

Members

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

Officers

Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer, Head of Finance, Head of Service Delivery, Head of Operational Risk Management, Clerk to the Fire Authority and Executive Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Minnery. Councillor Mason did not attend the meeting and subsequently gave his apologies.

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 Carter, Hartin, Kiernan and Mellings declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items 14 and 16 on the agenda, in that they were directors on the board of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. They had been granted a dispensation by the Fire Authority, which allowed them to take part in the discussion of, and vote on, matters relating to Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services, providing that legal opinion considered the participation to be appropriate.

On this occasion, due to the nature of the items being considered, Councillors Carter, Hartin, Kiernan and Mellings undertook to leave the meeting room before any discussion of, and voting on, items 14 and 16 on the agenda took place.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 24 February 2016.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 24 February 2016, 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 Brigade Managers' Employment Panel Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meeting, held on 7 March 2016.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meeting, held on 7 March 2016, be noted.

6 Standards and Human Resources Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 15 March 2016.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 15 March 2016, be noted.

7 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 17 March 2016.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 17 March 2016, be noted.

8 Fire Authority Work Plan 2016/17

This report reviewed progress against the Fire Authority's 2015/16 Work Plan and put forward a 2016/17 Work Plan for consideration and approval by Members.

It was proposed by Councillor Kiernan, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note progress made against the Fire Authority 2015/16 Work Plan, as detailed at paragraph 4 of the report; and
- b) Approve the 2016/17 Work Plan (attached at the appendix to the report), without amendment.

9 Financial Performance to March 2016

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

The Head of Finance (HoF) presented this report and talked through the table on page 2, which set out the variances, identified within the 2015/16 budget. She drew attention to the table on page 4, which detailed the Fire Authority's current investments and assured Members about the safety of these investments, including the fact that any local authority counterparties had central Government backing.

Councillor Hartin referred to page 3 of the report and asked to which contingencies the variances would be transferred. The HoF advised that the final outturn, which would include this detail, would be reported to the June meeting of the Fire Authority.

Councillor Adams referred to the table of current investments on page 4 of the report and asked for further detail about Handelsbanken. The Treasurer advised Members that Handelsbanken was a Swedish bank, which was highly rated with regard to investment safety.

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

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 2015/16.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Assistant Chief Fire Officer left the meeting room at this point (2.15 pm).

10 Localism Act 2011

This report proposed actions for the Fire Authority following receipt of the notice of retirement from Chief Fire Officer John Redmond.

Councillor Hartin asked if the Fire Authority was clear on the reasons as to why the Chief Fire Officer's salary was set at over £100k, when there was currently a focus on expenditure within the public sector. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) explained that the salary for the post was linked to Gold Book aligned bandings for population and was decided locally.

Councillor Adams commented that the salary details for Brigade Managers had been brought to the February meeting of the Fire Authority when the Pay Policy had been agreed. Councillor Hartin replied that he had concerns about possible public perception of senior officers' pay.

It was proposed by Councillor Reynolds, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree, in principle, to employ a Chief Fire Officer on a salary of over £100,000; and, having agreed this,
- b) Delegate authority to the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel (the Panel) to review and amend the job description of the Chief Fire Officer;
- c) Agree to engage recruitment advisors to assist in the recruitment process; and
- d) Direct the Panel as a matter of urgency to commence the recruitment process for a new Chief Fire Officer, reporting back to the Fire Authority with its recommendations for appointment.

In addition, the Fire Authority agreed that the Recruitment Panel for the process should consist of five Members, who would be drawn from the existing Brigade Managers' Employment Panel (BMEP). In the event of there being any issues with achieving political balance on the Recruitment Panel, it was agreed that the Clerk, as part of his delegated powers, would authorise any required changes to the membership of the BMEP.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer returned to the meeting room at this point (2.25 pm).

11 Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP)

11a IRMP 1 – Integrated Crewing Model Project

This report advised Members of the progress made in relation to the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 1 Integrated Crewing Model Project, including the outcomes from consultation on potential changes to the Wholetime Duty System (WDS). It also sought approval to progress changes, as recommended by the Project Board.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented this report and explained that the Head of Operational Risk Management (HORM) and Head of Service Delivery Transformation (HSDT) would provide further detail as required. The officers concerned then talked through the report in detail.

Councillor Mrs Barrow asked how many other fire and rescue services (FRSs) had made changes to their wholetime duty system and if anything was known about the impact on staff and their morale. The HORM explained that most FRSs were considering changes to their wholetime shift systems but he did not know definite numbers. Officers had conducted a thorough impact analysis, as the Service recognised that change should have the least impact possible on individuals. There had been notable concerns over the introduction of 12-hour shifts, hence shift times had been changed to those recommended in the report.

Councillor Mrs Barrow asked again about morale and, in particular, if any mental health issues had been identified in other services. The HORM replied that he was not aware of any such issues. Industrial relations had been strained in some services but this was possibly because they had changed their duty systems more significantly. There was also a culture of openness between this Service and the Representative Bodies (RBs), which helped to overcome such issues.

Councillor Mrs Barrow then asked how the Service would monitor the impact of the changes on staff. The DCFO explained that a collective agreement was to be established on the negotiation points outlined in the report and that it was proposed that a Champions Group be established to ensure staff feedback was captured.

Councillor Hartin asked if there were known reasons as to why there had only been a 48% response to the Staff Consultation Survey. The DCFO responded that it was difficult to provide reasons for the level of response. Feedback had been monitored and it was possible that some employees had sought representation of their opinions through colleagues and/or the RBs. In addition to the online survey, the consultation process had included face-to-face engagement and an open forum on the Service's internal website.

Councillor Price thanked the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for their involvement in all three IRMP projects and the response given at 11c. He said that the outside view was that the Authority had gone about the changes concerned in a good way. It had recognised its role and the current culture of austerity and identified non-negotiable issues, i.e. no stations or pumps would be lost and there would be no redundancies. In contrast, other fire authorities had had markedly different experiences.

Councillor Price added, however, that he did have some concerns regarding the proposed changes, in particular around engagement and consultation with staff. He, therefore, moved that a further recommendation be included to read as follows:

- d) A 12-month review of the new duty system be undertaken and reported back to the Fire Authority.

This was seconded by Councillor Carter and agreed by the Fire Authority.

The DCFO asked if the review was to be done from the date of implementation of the new duty system. It was agreed by the Fire Authority that this was the case.

Councillor Adams referred to page 11 of the report and the FBU's recommendation regarding reinvestment of cuts back into the Service. He thought that general reinvestment of funds would be needed, as, logically, the Service would need to spend money to overcome issues, such as the ICT implications of introducing a new duty system.

Councillor West commented that the views, set out on page 11 of the report, were those of the FBU. Councillor Adams acknowledged this but reiterated that there was a need to plan to ensure a smooth transition.

The DCFO responded that the FBU's comment was limited, as it was specific to specialist appliances and referred to the financial comment on page 15 of the report, which explained that financial consequences would become clearer after the negotiation phase had been completed.

Councillor Dr Jones said that it had been a long process but the perception was that the Fire Authority was protecting both the service it provided and its staff with the proposed changes. The Authority was, therefore, in the best position to move forward with continuing dialogue with its employees and the RBs.

Councillor Carter commented that he wished to reassure the FBU that their comments had been taken on board.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Support the recommendation that a new duty system for wholetime staff be implemented on or before 1 January 2017, based on:
 - 4 Watch Flexible Rostering duty system
 - Locally managed rostering
 - On a shift for shift basis
 - With start and finish times of 0800-1800 and 1800-0800
- b) Direct officers to negotiate with Representative Bodies as required to implement the changes;
- c) Recognise the consultation that had already taken place and delegate responsibility to the StraP Working Group to monitor the Service's implementation of these recommendations and report progress back to the Fire Authority at its October 2016 meeting; and
- d) Agree that a 12-month review of the new duty system be undertaken, from the date of implementation, and reported back to the Fire Authority.

11b IRMP 2 – Fire Control Review Project

This report advised Members on the progress made in relation to the Fire Control Review Project, including the outcomes from consultation on potential changes to the Fire Control Duty System, and sought approval to progress changes, as recommended by the StraP Working Group.

The DCFO presented this report and again advised that the Head of Operational Risk Management (HORM) and Head of Service Delivery Transformation (HSDT) would provide further detail as required. The officers concerned then talked through the report in detail.

The DCFO highlighted that there was an error in Table 3 on page 5 of the report, where, under the Advantages heading for each duty system, reference had been made, erroneously, to the potential to reduce staff numbers.

The DCFO referred to the FBU letter of 22 April 2016 and the comment on page 2, which stated that there was little doubt that the part of the IRMP 2 proposal on self-rostering and annualised hours would be disappointing to FBU members. The DCFO commented that the system proposed was both feasible and a reasonable modern way of working.

Councillor Price commented that the Fire Authority had no desire to lose its Fire Control function. Fire Control personnel had fought their corner on this issue with the support of officers. He said that he would have liked to have seen the proposed changes some time ago, especially as there were concerns over the future and Fire Control must be both effective and efficient. The changes to the wholetime duty system should be easy to implement, as they were not radical. The changes to Fire Control were, however, significant and this needed to be recognised.

Councillor Price moved that a further recommendation be included to read as follows:

- g) That a 12-month review, from implementation, of the new Fire Control duty system be undertaken and reported back to the Fire Authority.

Councillor Carter commented that recommendation e) in the report asked for a progress report to be brought to the Fire Authority in October 2016. Councillor Carter then proposed that recommendation e) be amended to read:

- e) Delegate responsibility to the Strategic Planning Working Group to monitor the implementation of these recommendations and report progress back to the Fire Authority at its October 2016 meeting, followed by a 12 month review.

Councillor Dr Jones seconded this amended recommendation and it was agreed by the Fire Authority.

Councillor Adams commented on the current high levels of absence in Fire Control and asked if the new duty arrangements would affect this. The DCFO responded that the ideal would be to reduce the levels of absence in tandem with achieving the desired savings. However, the issue of absence levels was outside the scope of the report. The professional opinion was that the implementation of a new duty system should reduce absence, because it was a self-maintaining system. It should also bring about improvements to the working environment, which should in turn affect absence levels.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Support the recommendation that a new duty system for Fire Control staff be implemented on or before 1 January 2017, based on:
- A Self-Rostering duty system
 - Locally managed rostering
 - Keeping the current start and finish times of 0800-1800 and 1800-0800
 - Annualised hours (as described in section 4 of the report)
- b) Recognise the consultation that had taken place and direct officers to negotiate with Representative Bodies as required to implement the changes;
- c) Note the introduction of new internal work-streams into Fire Control, which were aimed at enhancing service delivery and firefighter safety, as well as improving the efficiency of this important function;

- d) Note that the Service would continue to monitor and identify opportunities for commercial income generation through Fire Control;
- e) Delegate responsibility to the Strategic Planning Working Group to monitor the implementation of these recommendations and report progress back to the Fire Authority at its October 2016 meeting, followed by a 12 month review; and
- f) Direct officers to monitor and evaluate all collaborative opportunities regionally and sub-regionally, and any other opportunities that might arise.

11c Fire Brigades Union Response to IRMP (1 and 2) Action Plans

This paper outlined the Fire Brigades Union's position in relation to Integrated Risk Management Plans 1 and 2.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the Fire Brigades Union response, as set out in the document.

11d IRMP 3 – Telford Central Review Project

This report updated Members on progress with the Telford Central Review Project, and presented the results of the Feasibility Study so that Members could decide which option they wished to take forward for further consideration.

The HSDT presented this report and talked through its contents in detail. He informed Members that there was an error on page 3 of report, where the final line of the first paragraph should read '...in direct competition with the work of the Partnership' rather than '...in direct completion'.

Councillor Carter thanked the HSDT and the IRMP team for their work on the reports, presented to the meeting. He commented that the issue of the Telford Central site was exceptionally important, particularly given the growth that was occurring in Telford. It was vital for the Fire Authority to keep its options open to ensure the future safety of the Telford area. He said that questions might be asked about why the Fire Authority was spending this amount of money in a time of austerity. The safety of communities was, however, most important and it was the right time to make this investment.

Councillor Adams commented that he had joined the Fire Authority in 2009 and had seen the investments in Shrewsbury and Wellington. In his opinion, now was the time to invest in Telford Central. He thanked officers for their information gathering and subsequent advice, which Members had taken over the years. This project was the fruit of those years of work. The Chair agreed that the proposed Telford Central improvements were the way ahead for the Service.

Councillor Mellings supported the comments already made by Members. However, he felt that the devil was in the detail and referred to the feasibility estimates that were set out in the appendices to the report.

He was pleased that the Fire Authority would reconsider the project at the tender stage, as it was likely that costs could increase, and he asked if there was a possible cap on the costs of getting to the tender stage.

The Head of Resources responded that there would be a formal procurement process and that architects' fees were normally around 8 to 10% of the total build costs of a project. These costs would be stretched through the project, the total cost of which was estimated at £400k. Cost implications would become clearer as the project was progressed and developments would be reported back regularly to the Strategic Planning (StraP) Working Group.

Councillor Dr Jones commented that there could be questions around the project, particularly regarding use of council tax, and she asked how publicity would be handled throughout process. The DCFO responded that there was the potential to have a media stream running alongside the project to highlight the benefits to the public.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the contents of the report; and
- b) Approve unanimously the recommendations contained in Section 7 of the report that:
 - 1) Members give permission for officers to progress the project to the Tender Process stage, undertaking a detailed exploration of the costs for the option, i.e. "Optimal for the Fire and Rescue Service and its Partners" (Option 3), in both the refurbishment and rebuild versions;

The outline plan for the project, including the date the tender results would be brought back to the Fire Authority for its consideration, would be presented to the Fire Authority at its next meeting;
 - 2) The Fire Authority delegate responsibility for monitoring the Service's work on this project, to the StraP Working Group, up to the stage where tenders from building contractors were received and a firm decision from the Fire Authority then required.

12 Annual Plan 2016/17

This report presented the new Annual Plan for 2016/17.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority approve the Annual Plan 2016/17.

13 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 year 2014/15 and 2015/16. It also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service.

The DCFO presented this paper and highlighted the reduction in economic value of lives saved from 2014/15 to 2015/16. The DCFO explained that the two reasons for this reduction were increased value for money and the move within the Service to prevention rather than response.

The CFO advised that work was progressing on the production of posters displaying this information.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the paper.

Councillors Carter, Hartin, Kiernan and Mellings left the meeting room at this point (3.58 pm).

14 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. Articles of Association

This report presented the draft Articles of Association for Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. As the sole shareholder of the Company, the Fire Authority was asked to consider and, if appropriate, approve these Articles.

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow, and

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the draft Articles of Association;
- b) Approve the Articles of Association, without amendment;
- c) Agree that Board Members should be permitted to vote on Company matters at shareholder meetings, where no conflict of interest exists; and
- d) Agree that future “shareholder” meetings should be separated from the normal Fire Authority meetings.

15 Local Government Act 1972

It was proposed by Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and

Resolved that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting room for the following items on the grounds that they 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 Paragraph 3

16 The Future of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. (Paragraph 3)

This report sought a decision from the Fire Authority on the future of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd (the Company), following the resignation of the Technical Sales Manager and the potential impact this could have on the Company’s performance into the future.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the contents of the report;
- b) Approve the outline Business Plan for 2016/17, as recommended by the Board at Section 7 of the report; and
- c) Direct that progress against that Plan be reported to the Audit and Performance Management Committee throughout 2016/17.

The meeting closed at 4.25 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....