

**Non-Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held on Thursday, 24 April 2014, at 3.00 pm  
at Service Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

## **Present**

### **Members**

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

### **Officers**

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Service Delivery, Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Resources, Group Manager Prevention, Clerk to the Fire Authority, Corporate Support Manager and Executive Support Officer

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence from Members.

The Treasurer had 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 should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

## **3 Non-Exempt Minutes**

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 26 February 2014.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Dr Jones, and, with Councillor Minnery abstaining as he had not been present at the meeting, it was

**Resolved** that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 26 February 2014, 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

### 5a Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 13 March 2014 and considered the recommendation at item 12 that the provision for the Appliance Bay Doors Scheme be increased from £70,000 to £96,000. Members also considered the Annual Treasury Report 2012/13 at item 8 in the minutes of the meeting.

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

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 13 March 2014, be noted and that the recommendation at item 12, that the provision for the Appliance Bay Doors Scheme be increased from £70,000 to £96,000, be agreed.

Councillor Mellings referred to page 4 of the Annual Treasury Report 2012/13, which set out the Fire Authority's treasury position and the interest rates that had been achieved during 2012/13 and commented that the interest rates were lower than he would have expected and asked why this was. The Head of Finance (HoF) explained that the benchmark levels are set by Treasury Management, which is undertaken for the Fire Authority by Shropshire Council, at the beginning of the year. As the HoF was not able to explain fully the rationale used to set the levels, she undertook to find this information out and report her findings back to the Fire Authority.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the Annual Treasury Report 2012/13 (item 8 in the minutes)

## 6 Audit and Performance Management Committee Non-Exempt Minutes

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 27 March 2014, and considered the recommendations at items 7a and 10.

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

**Resolved** that the non-exempt minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 27 March 2014, be noted and that the recommendations at items 7a and 10, as given below, be agreed

### Item 7a – Internal Audit Plan 2014/15

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the programme of audits for 2014/15, as set out in the report

## **Item 10 – Review of Whistleblowing Policy**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the Whistleblowing Policy without amendment

## **7 Standards and Human Resources Committee Minutes**

Members received the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 8 April 2014, and considered the recommendations at items 8b, 11 and 12.

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 8 April 2014, be noted and that the recommendations at items 8b, 11 and 12, as given below, be agreed

### **Item 8b – Role Description and Skills and Competencies for the Fire Authority’s Independent Person**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree that no changes are required to the Role Description and Skills and Competencies for the Fire Authority’s Independent Person

### **Item 11 – Review of Protocol on Member / Officer Relations**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, as recommended to it by the Standards and Human Resources Committee

### **Item 12 – Review of Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality, as recommended to it by the Standards and Human Resources Committee

## **8 Fire Authority Work Plan 2014/15**

This report reviewed progress against the Fire Authority’s 2013/14 Work Plan and put forward a 2014/15 Work Plan for consideration and approval by Members.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note progress made against the Fire Authority 2013/14 Work Plan, as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report; and
- b) Approve the 2014/15 Work Plan (attached at the appendix to the report) without amendment

## **9 Financial Performance to February 2014**

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

The HoF explained that the variances reported were up to February 2014 and that any further variances identified for the financial year concerned would be reported to the Fire Authority in due course.

The HoF then talked through the table of variances, as set out on page 2 of the report. She explained that the underspend in relation to Area Command was due to vacancies and that there had been reduced activity in relation to the Retained Duty System (RDS), which had created an underspend. The HoF also explained that there were further amendments to be made to the Operations figure, which would be reported to the Authority in due course.

The HoF reported that, with regard to capital charges, savings had been identified in budgets for debt interest and contributions to reserves in lieu of debt charges. The revenue budget had been reduced accordingly for 2014/15. The variances to the Training budget were due to there being no wholetime firefighter recruitment and no upskilling of current employees. Further information on the use of the training aids and resources budget would be brought to the Fire Authority in due course.

Councillor Mrs Barrow referred to paragraph 6 of the report, which detailed the outstanding authority debtor. She asked why the insurance company concerned had not paid out and also why the debtor was not being named. The HoF explained that the insurance company had been contacted but there had been another claim related to the incident, which they had settled, and they had then closed the case. The HoF advised that the debtor could not be named, as it was unclear where the liability for the invoice lay.

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 movements and virements to the revenue budget, where requested;
- c) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2013/14; and
- d) Approve the write off of a bad debt of £2,500, as detailed in section 6 of the report

## 10 Primary Authority Scheme

This report provided an update on the outcome of the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) Pilot and the subsequent decision, made by Government, to extend the Primary Authority Scheme to include the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 from 6 April 2014.

Councillor Bennett asked the following questions:

- How many national companies had their headquarters in Shropshire?
- How many multinational companies were there in Shropshire, for example in the Telford and Wrekin area?
- How confident was the Service in identifying high-risk sites, if companies were getting advice from elsewhere? How would the Service know what advice companies were receiving and how would the advice be moderated?

The Group Manager (GM) Prevention responded that he was not able to give an exact number of companies in the area but the PAS had been operating for a number of years. Administration of the PAS had been carried out by local authorities, so the Service would approach them first for information, such as this. With regard to the third point raised, the GM explained that a six-month trial of the PAS had been undertaken. This had involved training sessions and pilot schemes with the aim of trying to make businesses safer.

Councillor Adams asked how the advice, given to companies whose headquarters were outside Shropshire, would be monitored. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) responded that the PAS did not have to be formed in the local authority areas, where company headquarters were. In terms of moderation, the PAS would be responsible for applying legislation to all parts of a company in all parts of the country. Local authorities would be notified of any changes to fire regulations, which were available for all to see. Ultimately, moderation of the regulations would be determined by the courts.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the extension of the Primary Authority Scheme to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the requirement to abide by the terms and conditions of the Scheme, when undertaking its regulatory activities; and
- b) Endorse the active participation of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service in delivering the Primary Authority Scheme.

## 11 Service Plan 2014/15

At its meeting in February the Fire Authority agreed the outline format and contents of the Service Plan 2014/15 and a change to Strategic Aim 4. In addition, the Authority delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Fire Authority, to agree the final wording and layout of the Plan and delegated responsibility to its Strategy and Resources Committee to agree the Public Value Measures 2014/15, which support the four Strategic Aims. Members were asked to receive and endorse the final Service Plan 2014/15.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority endorse the final Service Plan 2014/15

## 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 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 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3

At this point, all officers except the Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery, Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services, Head of Finance, Head of Resources, Clerk to the Fire Authority, Corporate Support Manager and Executive Support Officer, left the meeting room.

### **13 Fire Authority Exempt Minutes (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)**

Members received the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 26 February 2014.

It was proposed by Councillor Dr Jones, seconded by Councillor Carter, and, with Councillor Minnery abstaining as he had not been present at the meeting,

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 26 February 2014, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

### **14 Audit and Performance Management Committee Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 3)**

Members received the exempt minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 27 March 2014.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the exempt minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 27 March 2014

### **15 Capital Works 2014/15 (Paragraph 3)**

This report asked the Fire Authority to vary the agreed 2014/15 capital programme to bring forward the light pumping unit scheme from 2016/17 and to increase the funding for the Wellington biomass boiler scheme.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the recommendations, as set out in the report

At this point, all officers except the Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services, Clerk to the Fire Authority, Corporate Support Manager and Executive Support Officer, left the meeting room.

### **16 Process for the Recruitment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Paragraph 3)**

This report asked the Fire Authority to ratify the decision of its Brigade Managers' Employment Panel on the appointment of a new Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the recommendations as set out in the report

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**.....