

**Non-Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 26 February 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, Picken, Price, Thompson and West (Chair)

Officers

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

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Minnery and Miss Reynolds. The Chief Fire Officer had also given his apologies for absence.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Kiernan back after his leave of absence following sickness. Councillor Kiernan thanked Members and officers for their good wishes during his illness.

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

In relation to item 14 on the agenda – Revenue Budget: 2014/15 Precept, the Clerk, in accordance with the authority delegated to him by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 18 July 2012, had granted dispensations to all Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Members to take part in the discussion of, and voting on, the setting of the Fire Authority budget and/or precept and the Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances. The dispensation was valid from 12 December 2012 to 11 December 2016.

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Kiernan and Mellings declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 22, in that they were directors on the board of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. They had been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee, which allowed them to take part in the discussion and vote on matters relating to Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services, providing that legal opinion considered the participation to be appropriate.

On this occasion, the report to be considered informed the Fire Authority of decisions that had been made by the Board of directors and was for information purposes only. It was, therefore, deemed appropriate for Councillors Mrs Barrow, Hartin, Kiernan and Mellings to participate in discussion of the item.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 11 December 2013.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 11 December 2013, 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 Audit and Performance Management Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 27 September 2013.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 27 September 2013

6 Brigade Managers' Employment Panel Non-Exempt Minutes

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meetings, held on 9 January 2014 and 6 February 2014.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the non-exempt minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meetings, held on 9 January 2014 and 6 February 2014

7 Strategy and Resources Committee Non-Exempt Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 6 February 2014, and considered the recommendations at items 5, 8 and 9.

The Chair advised that recommendation a) on paper 7b related to paper 9 on this agenda, which was to be considered in exempt session. If, however, there were no questions from Members in relation to that recommendation, it could be considered and agreed as part of this agenda item. There were no questions from Members in relation to the recommendation.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 6 February 2014, be noted and that the recommendations at item 5, 8 and 9, as given below, be agreed.

Item 5 Financial Performance to December 2013

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) Approve changes to the capital programme; and
- d) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2013/14

Item 8 Capital Programmes 2014/15 to 2018/19 and Prudential Guidelines

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Confirm the 2014/15 onward programmes, as set out in the Appendix (exempt paper 11), as part of its final precept deliberations;
- b) Approve the Prudential Indicators and the Treasury Strategy for 2014/15; and
- c) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision 2014/15

Item 9 Adequacy of Provisions and Reserves and Robustness of Budget

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree:

- a)
 - i) the reserves and provisions, as set out in the appendix to the report; and
 - ii) the Treasurer's assurances covering the robustness of the 2014/15 budget and adequacy of the reserves and provisions; and
- b) to note the material uncertainties from 2015/16 onwards

At this point, it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Bennett and

Resolved that the order of the agenda be varied to allow agenda item 8 and the exempt business at agenda items 9 to 12 to be considered at the end of the meeting, after all non-exempt business had been considered.

Committee Clerk's Note

The numbers allocated to the various items of business are those given on the original agenda for the meeting.

13 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Planning 2014/15

This report incorporated the recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Strategy and Resources Committee on 6 February 2014, and by the Strategic Risk and Planning Group (StRaP) Members' Working Group on 12 February 2014, in relation to the revenue budget for 2014/15. The report also confirmed the assumptions for medium-term financial planning.

The Head of Finance (HoF) advised that the report should be considered and agreed together with agenda item 14 – Revenue Budget: 2014/15 Precept.

The HoF referred to section 3 of the report, which set out the developments that had occurred since the December 2013 meeting of the Fire Authority. The council tax referendum threshold had been announced at 2% on 5 February 2014, the day before the Strategy and Resources Committee was due to meet. This meant that the Committee considered a number of exemplifications for the precept increase, which would have various impacts on forward planning assumptions. Because of this, a meeting of the StRaP Group was convened on 12 February 2014 to consider the precept increase and its impact. The recommendation put forward from this meeting by the Group was that the precept increase be set at 1.99% for 2014/15, with this figure being maintained for subsequent years.

The HoF also advised that there had been an increase in the business rates income figures for 2014/15, which would be factored into planning assumptions for 2014/15 and future years.

The table on page 3 of the report set out the proposed final budget package for 2014/15, including a precept increase of 1.99%. The projections in the table indicated a deficit of £877,000 in 2019/20.

Councillor Hartin commented that it was pleasing that the Fire Authority was in a better position than earlier in the process, when the predicted deficit for 2019/20 was £1.9m, which had reduced gradually to £877,000. Both the Strategy and Resources Committee and the StRaP Group had given much thought to the precept issue and had concluded that raising the precept by 1.99% gave more benefit to the Authority than accepting the council tax freeze grant.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority approve:

- a) A revenue budget for 2014/15 and a forward financial projection to 2019/20, as set out in section 6 of the report; and
- b) Incorporating these projections into the Medium Term Financial Plan.

14 Revenue Budget: 2014/15 Precept

This report sought Fire Authority approval to a budget for 2014/15; Council Tax levels for 2014/15; and precepts on billing authorities and related matters.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority approve:

- a) That a net budget requirement is set at £21,379,887 (calculated in accordance with the provisions of Section 43(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992);
- b) A total precept of £13,091,142 to be levied on the billing authorities;
- c) A Council Tax resulting in a basic amount of Council Tax at Band D calculated in accordance with the provisions of the 1992 Act (Section 44) of £90.42;
- d) Under Section 40(2) of the 1992 Act:
 - i) The amount of Council Tax calculated for each category of dwelling in each billing authority's area, as follows:

Band	2014/15 Council Tax £ p
A	60.28
B	70.33
C	80.37
D	90.42
E	110.51
F	130.61
G	150.70
H	180.84

- ii) The amount calculated (in accordance with Section 48 of the 1992 Act) as payable by billing authorities for 2014/15, as follows:

Council	Precept £
Shropshire Council	9,084,966
Borough of Telford & Wrekin Council	4,006,176
	<hr/>
	13,091,142

- e) That the Treasurer:
 - i) Issue the necessary precepts and information to the billing authorities in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV of Part 1 of the 1992 Act and be authorised to make any amendment to the above to reflect the final approved budget, after consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority; and

- ii) Is authorised to make payments required from, and to, reserves and provisions within the approved budget strategy and within the Authority's Financial Rules, in conjunction with the Chair and the Vice-Chair;
- f) Approve the revenue budget and pensions account, illustrated in Appendix A, for budgetary control in accordance with approved standing orders;
- g) Approve the Service Reporting Code of Practice Provisional Revenue Account at Appendix B; and
- h) Approve the schedule of reserves and provisions at Appendix C

15 Integrated Risk Management 2020 Process

This report informed Members of the outcomes from Phase 2 of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) 2020 Process and sought a decision on which proposals should go forward for full consultation in Phase 3.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery (ACFO-SD) explained that Phase 2 of the IRMP 2020 Process had been based on impact assessments of the five options for change, which could support reductions in the revenue budget, identified by the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2013. Initially, the Service had been planning for a budget deficit of £1.7 million in 2020. Following the changes to budget planning, as set out in paper 13 on this agenda, it was now predicted that this deficit would be less than £1 million. In light of this, the Strategy and Resources Committee felt it was appropriate for the proposals to be reconsidered by the StRaP Working Group on 12 February 2014.

The ACFO-SD reported that this impact assessment process had generated the largest amount of feedback for the Service's IRMP consultation over the past 10 years. This included liaison with, and campaigns run by, the Retained Duty System stations named in the proposals and the involvement of local MPs, such as Philip Dunne.

The Chair of the StRaP Working Group, Councillor Hartin, commented that it had been a long, involved process and the feedback gained had been extremely helpful. He reminded the Fire Authority that this was only impact assessment at this stage and that the Authority would now decide which options should go forward to Phase 3 for full consultation.

Councillor Hartin then referred to paragraph 10 of the report, which set out the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee and the StRaP Working Group in relation to each of the options and talked through each of them in turn. He informed the Fire Authority that, if the recommendations listed were all implemented, this, together with the £450,000 worth of 'officer-led' changes (set out in paragraph 4 of the report), could generate budget reductions of up to £1.15 million by 2020. This would give the Fire Authority some leeway over budget reductions as it was currently estimated that £0.9 million of budget reductions would be needed by 2020.

Councillor Price commented that staff engagement in the process had been very good, with the professionalism and commitment of staff being highlighted, as well as their value in their communities. He added that he now felt that the Service was prepared for difficult times ahead by undertaking this process.

Councillor Dr Jones commented that she was delighted with the outcome of the process, as the Authority had planned for the worst-case scenario but was now in a much better position than had been predicted.

Councillor Carter commented that the process had been necessary and very rewarding, especially with regard to the quality of the officers involved and the levels of community support.

The Chair commented that the IRMP 2020 Process had been a very good and unique one. He reminded Members that there was still a lot to be done as the process continued to progress forward and that any future changes might necessitate these decisions being revisited.

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

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the proposals that officers would be taking forward for internal consideration within Phase 3 of the IRMP 2020 Plan;
- b) Note the feedback received from Phase 2 of the IRMP 2020 Process at Appendix 1;
- c) Note the information contained within the impact assessments at Appendix 2; and
- d) Approve the recommendations, from its Strategy and Resources Committee and Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group, as set out in section 10 of the report

16 Annual Service Plan 2014/15

This report set out proposals for the annual Service Plan 2014/15 to support the delivery of the Fire Authority's Medium-Term Corporate Plan.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree the outline format and contents of the Service Plan 2014/15;
- b) Agree the proposed change to Strategic Aim 4;
- c) Delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Fire Authority, to agree the final wording and layout of the Service Plan;
- d) Task officers with updating the Medium-Term Corporate Plan; and
- e) Delegate responsibility to the Strategy and Resources Committee to agree the Public Value Measures 2014/15, which support the Fire Authority's four Strategic Aims

17 Code of Corporate Governance 2013/14

This report put forward a draft Code of Corporate Governance 2013/14 for consideration and formal adoption by the Fire Authority.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority formally adopt the 2013/14 Code of Corporate Governance without amendment.

18 Annual Review of Charges for Special Services

This report presented proposed increases in charges made for special services.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Barrow, seconded by Councillor Hurst-Knight, and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the proposed charges for special services to be applied from 1 April 2014

Councillor Picken left the meeting at this point (3.37 pm).

19 Proposed Amendments to the Pay Policy Statement

This report provided the proposed amendments to the current Pay Policy Statement for consideration of the full Authority, as required under the Localism Act 2011 and in accordance with the process agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2012.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the proposed amendments to the current Pay Policy Statement

20 Firefighters' Pension and Compensation Schemes – Delegations and Policies

This report informed the Fire Authority of the amendments to the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme 1992 (FPS), the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 (NFPS) and the Firefighters' Compensations Scheme 2006 (FCS). It recommended decisions on the required discretions and also general policies under each Scheme to facilitate effective implementation of those decisions.

Councillor Picken returned to the meeting at this point (3.40 pm).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Corporate Services (ACFO-CS) talked through, in detail, each of the changes that were being recommended to the Fire Authority.

Councillor Price referred to Rule K4 – withdrawal of a pension whilst employed by a fire and rescue authority (abatement), the changes to which were not retrospective, and asked if this affected any employees. The ACFO-CS confirmed that it did not.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree:

- a) The recommendation at paragraph 4.1 with regard to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, Rule B7 Commutation – discretion to permit the maximum payment;
- b) The recommendation at paragraph 4.2 with regard to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, Rule K4 – withdrawal of a pension whilst employed by a fire and rescue authority (abatement);
- c) The updated table of discretions and proposed policies for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, as set out at Appendix A to the report;
- d) The updated table of discretions and proposed policies for the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006, as set out at Appendix B to the report; and
- e) The new table of discretions and proposed policies for the Firefighters' Compensation Scheme 2006, as set out at Appendix C to the report

21 Annual Report of Human Resources Committee

This report advised of the work carried out by the Fire Authority's Human Resources Committee during 2013.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the report

22 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services

This report provided an update on the Fire Authority controlled company, Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services (SFRMS).

The Corporate Support Manager (CSM) explained that a 'soft' launch of SFRMS had taken place during February 2014. Further details of the launch would be provided to the Audit and Performance Management Committee at its meeting on 27 March 2014.

Councillor Bennett asked when the profit from SFRMS would start to be seen coming into the Fire Authority and what risk was attached to reliance on income that might not be sustained.

The HoF responded that she was currently working on a disclosure note, regarding the profits, with the auditors and that the risk question could not be answered at present.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the update

8 Local Government Act 1972

It was proposed by Councillor Bennett, 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 Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3

9 Capital Programmes 2014/15 to 2018/19 and Prudential Guidelines (Paragraph 3)

Members received the paper on Capital Programmes 2014/15 to 2018/19 and Prudential Guidelines (the appendix to paper 7b).

The Fire Authority had already agreed (at item 7 above) the paper on Capital Programmes 2013/14 to 2017/18 and Prudential Guidelines (the appendix to paper 7b on this agenda).

10 Fire Authority Exempt Minutes (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)

Members received the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 11 December 2013.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow, and, with Councillor Kiernan abstaining as he had not been present at the meeting,

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 11 December 2013, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

11 Strategy and Resources Committee Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 3)

Members received the exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 6 February 2014.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 6 February 2014

**12 Brigade Managers' Employment Panel Exempt Minutes
(Paragraph 3)**

Members received the exempt minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meetings, held on 9 January 2014 and 6 February 2014.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the exempt minutes of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel meetings, held on 9 January 2014 and 6 February 2014

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

**12c Process for the Recruitment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer
(Paragraph 3)**

This report asked the Fire Authority to consider and approve the recommendations of its Brigade Managers' Employment Panel regarding the process for recruitment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

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

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

The meeting closed at 4.10 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....