

## Quorum for Committee Meetings

### Report of the Clerk

For further information about this report please contact Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager, on 01743 260210 or Sue Kembrey, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, on 01952 383200.

### 1 Purpose of Report

This report sets out the current arrangements regarding the quorum for Fire Authority committees and asks Members to consider whether they wish to make any changes to these arrangements.

### 2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to consider this report and decide whether any changes should be made to the current arrangements regarding the quorum for its committees.

### 3 Background

At the last meeting of the Fire Authority on 14 February 2007 Members discussed the quorum for its committees and specifically whether it is necessary to continue with the practice that a Member from each constituent authority must be present in order for a meeting to be quorate. As the Fire Authority is a precepting body in its own right and does not rely upon its constituent authorities for funding, it was felt by some Members that this requirement is now redundant. It was agreed at that time that officers would bring a report on this issue to a future meeting of the Authority.

### 4 The Combination Scheme and Standing Orders

Part III Paragraph 19 of The Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 (the statutory instrument, which established Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority) states:

“At a meeting of the Authority the quorum shall be one third of the total number of members of the Authority, or such greater number of members as



the Authority may determine, including at least one representative from each constituent authority.”

The Authority is defined in the Order as the combined fire authority. The definition does not include any reference to committees of the Authority.

The provision relating to the quorum has been included in the Authority’s Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business (Standing Order No 5.2). Again, the Standing Order refers specifically to the Fire Authority and not to its committees.

## **5 Current Constitution of Committees**

When the first committees of the Fire Authority were established, the provision from the Order relating to the quorum was included in the constitution for each one, although this was not a legal requirement. This practice has continued and the constitution for all current committees contains this provision. In recent months this has caused difficulties and a number of meetings have not been able to take place, because a Member from each constituent authority was not present.

## **6 Other Fire Authorities**

Following the request from Members for a report on this issue an enquiry was sent to other fire authorities to find out what they do. A number operate in the same way as this authority and one believes that it is appropriate to do so in order to demonstrate that business is conducted in a democratically accountable way. For others it would be impractical, as they have as many as 6 constituent authorities, some of which have only small numbers of representatives. There is, therefore, no uniform approach to this issue.

Members are asked to consider what would be best for this Fire Authority, bearing in mind the need for openness and transparency and the difficulties referred to in section 5 above.

## **7 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **8 Legal Comment**

Under The Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 and the Fire Authority’s Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business the quorum for a Fire Authority meeting must include at least one representative from each constituent authority. There is, however, no legal requirement for the Authority’s committees to operate this provision.

Should Members decide to abolish this provision, it would be necessary to amend the constitution of each committee.



## 9 Equality Impact Assessment

An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached to this report.

## 10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## 11 Background Papers

The Shropshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997

### **Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority**

Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business  
14 February 2007 Minutes

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity	*	Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*





**Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service    EQIA number**

**Initial Equality Impact Assessment Form**

Directorate	Executive	Department/ Section	Corporate Services
Name of officer	Sharon Lloyd	Job title	Corporate Services Manager
Name of Policy/Service to be assessed	Fire Authority 25 April 2007 Report 9 Quorum for Committee Meetings	Date of assessment	10 April 2007
New or existing policy	Existing		

1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service	The report seeks a decision from the Fire Authority regarding the quorum for its committees.		
2. Are there any associated objectives of the policy/service?	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business and Committee Constitution		
3. Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	It provides Members and officers with a clear corporate governance framework within which to operate its business.		
4. What outcomes are wanted from this policy/service?	To provide clear corporate governance		
5. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service?	Members and officers		
6. Who implements the policy/service and who is responsible for this?	Corporate Services – Sharon Lloyd and Lynn Ince Clerk and Monitoring Officer Sue Kembrey		
7. Are there any concerns that this policy/service could have a differential impact on the following groups and what existing evidence do you have for this? Yes or No, please detail in boxes below.			
8. Age	Y	N ✓	
9. Disability	Y	N ✓	
10. Gender	Y	N ✓	
11. Race	Y	N ✓	

12. Religion or belief	Y	N ✓	
13. Sexual orientation	Y	N ✓	
14. Dependant/caring responsibilities	Y	N ✓	
15. Could the differential impact identified in 7-14 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy/service?	Y	N	Please detail N/A
16. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or another reason?	Y	N	Please explain for each equality heading on a separate piece of paper. N/A
17. Have you consulted those who are likely to be affected by the policy/service?	Y ✓	N	List those groups/individuals that have been consulted. Report to go to Members on 17 April for them to decide the way forward at the meeting on 25 April
18. Should the policy proceed to a full impact assessment?	Y	N ✓	Please detail
19. Date by which full impact assessment to be completed	N/A		
20. Reason for non completion			

I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed.

I understand the Impact Assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Assessing person	Sharon Lloyd	Date:	10.4.07
Line Manager	Alan Taylor	Date:	12.4.07
Please note that this impact assessment will be scrutinised by the E&D Officer			

