

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority  
held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury,  
on Wednesday, 19 July 2006 at 2.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillors Box, Dr Drummond (from 3.20 pm) Eade, Hartin, Mrs Holyoak, Hurst-Knight, Hussey, Mellings, Morgan, Picken, Mrs Swift, Tandy and West

## **1 Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Mellings and seconded by Councillor Morgan

That Councillor Hartin be elected Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2007.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Hartin was duly elected Chair.

## **2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Picken

That Councillor Morgan be appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until the Annual Meeting in 2007.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Morgan was duly appointed Vice-Chair.

## **3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Allen and Davies. Councillor Dr Drummond had advised that she would be late as she had another meeting at 2.00pm.

Members were informed that, although Councillor Lloyd had not formally given his apologies for absence, he was unable to attend because he was seriously ill.

**Resolved:** *that a letter expressing the best wishes of the Members of the Fire Authority be sent to Councillor Lloyd.*

### **3a Order of Agenda**

The Chair advised that he intended to vary the order of the agenda so that item 12 – Reports of the Fire Authority's Lead Members and Member Champions was taken as the final item in open session. This was to enable Councillor Dr Drummond to give a verbal report on her role as the Fire Authority's Young People's Champion over the last year.



## 4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 5 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 14 June 2006.

**Resolved:** *that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 14 June 2006, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.*

## 6 Public Questions

No questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public.

## 7 Allocation of Seats to Political Groups, Appointments to, and Constitution of, Committees

The purpose of this report was to advise Members of the proposed composition of committees, allocation of seats to political groups and the appointments to committees, to confirm Member Champions/Lead Members and to review committee terms of reference and delegations.

It was reported that in Appendix A on page 3 the membership of the Retained Review Implementation Group should be 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative.

In addition, in Appendix B on page 4 Member Champions / Lead Champions, Lead Member for Information Technology and Implementing Electronic Government should read Lead Member for Information and Communications Technology.

Councillor Eade stated that it may be necessary to make minor amendments to the membership of Committees at a later date.

In relation to recommendation A, Councillor Eade asked about the implications of applying the political balance requirements to the Fire Authority's representation on the West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB). The Clerk responded that applying the requirements would necessitate the reworking of the political balance for all of the Fire Authority's Committees. As the calculations would need to be done outside the meeting, it would be necessary to adjourn the item until the October meeting. This would mean that temporary arrangements would need to be made to ensure representation on the WMRMB.

On a vote with twelve Members voting for and none voting against, recommendation A was agreed.

**Resolved:** *that Members agree:*

- a) *The committee composition and allocation of seats to political groups, as set out at Appendix A, including a resolution that, under section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the political balance requirements of that Act would not apply to the Fire Authority's representation on the West Midlands Regional Management Board;*



- b) *The appointment of Members to serve on committees and on the West Midlands Regional Management Board, and of Member Champions/Lead Members, as set out at Appendix B; and*
- c) *The Committee terms of reference and delegations, as set out at Appendix C.*

## **8 Review of Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders**

The purpose of this report was to review the Fire Authority's Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders and to agree proposed amendments.

Members were informed that:

In Section 2 recommendation b) should read paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7; and in Appendix A at 2.1.1 the final 3 lines should refer to the four main committees – Strategy and Resources, Audit and Performance Management, Human Resources and Standards.

In response to questions from Members, it was reported that, if goods or services were acquired through FireBuy, the Fire Authority's tendering process did not have to be followed. Furthermore, it was not necessary to procure goods or services through FireBuy, if it could be demonstrated that procurement from other sources would represent Best Value.

Members expressed concerns about the security of tenders submitted by e-mail, and the authority of the person submitting an e-mail tender to act on behalf of the company tendering. It was suggested that the person authorised to submit tenders should be required to send a digital signature. It was reported that before a contract is entered into with a supplier, a signed confirmation of the terms of the contract was required.

**Resolved:** *that Members*

- a) *Note the review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders; and*
- b) *Agree the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders, set out at paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the report.*

## **9 Audit and Performance Management Committee**

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 15 June 2006.

**Resolved:** *that Members note the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee, held on 15 June 2006*

## **10 Human Resources Committee**

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 12 July 2006.

**Resolved:** *that Members note the non-exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 12 July 2006.*



## 11 West Midlands Regional Management Board

Members received the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board meeting, held on 5 June 2006. The Chair asked Members to note rather than agree the recommendations at items 14/06, 18/06, 20/06, 21/06 and 22/06. This change was made in response to legal advice, which had been sought after Members raised concerns that they were being asked to agree recommendations for which they had not seen reports.

**Resolved:** *that the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board meeting, and the recommendations at items 14/06, 18/06, 20/06, 21/06 and 22/06, be noted.*

## 12 Reports of the Fire Authority's Lead Members and Member Champions

The Chair reminded Members that this item would be taken as the final item in open session for the reason set out at item 3a above.

## 13 Audit of Accounts 2005/06

This report informed Members of new auditing standards that would impact on the way the annual audit was carried out. The report also sought agreement to delegate a specific duty to the Audit and Performance Management Committee.

Councillor Eade reported that he had spoken to Councillor Allen, the current Chair of the Audit and Performance Management Committee, who had confirmed that he was happy to take on the responsibility of signing the Letter of Representation.

**Resolved:** *that*

- a) *The Fire Authority delegate to its Audit and Performance Management Committee the duty to receive each year the report International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 260 of the District Auditor to those charged with governance; and*
- b) *The Chair of the Audit and Performance Management Committee be authorised to sign the Letter of Representation each year on behalf of those charged with governance.*

## 14 Prudential Guidelines 2006/07

This report informed Members of progress against the Fire Authority's agreed Prudential Indicators for 2006/07. It also reported recommended changes to a number of its indicators, following monitoring of performance over the first quarter of the year.

**Resolved:** *that Members*

- a) *Note the position for 2006/07; and*
- b) *Approve the recommended adjustments relating to ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream, and investment interest variable rate exposure.*



## 15 Annual Efficiency Statements

This report informed Members of the submission of the efficiencies made in 2005/06 to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

**Resolved:** *that Members note the submission made on behalf of the Fire Authority, and its position in relation to the national target for efficiencies.*

## 16 Service and Budget Strategy 2007/08 – 2009/10

This report recommended a service and budget planning process for the period 2007/08 to 2009/10 for approval by Members.

Members were informed that the Appendix set out how the Fire Authority was managing its resources.

**Resolved:** *that Members agree the service and budget planning process, as outlined in the appendix to the report.*

## 17 National Best Value Performance Indicator League Tables 2004/05

This report informed Members of the performance of the Fire Authority in the Department for Communities and Local Government national Best Value Performance Indicator tables 2004/05.

Members congratulated the Fire Service on its performance in the 2004/05 tables.

**Resolved:** *that Members*

- a) *Note the report content in respect of performance; and*
- b) *Devolve responsibility for further analysis to the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee, where appropriate.*

## 18 Retained Review

This report informed Members of the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project.

The following details in the report were updated:

- i) In 2006/07 there had been 983 home safety visits and 658 detectors had been fitted.
- ii) On page 4 the number awaiting tests in all stations had increased from 12 to 21. It was confirmed that recruits were able to respond to incidents.
- iii) The Retained Support Officers appointed would start their duties on 7 August 2006.

In response to a question from Councillor Eade it was reported that the sum of £75,000 proposed to be transferred to Community Fire Safety would be allocated to fire stations on the basis of a risk assessment.



Councillor West commented on how implementation of the Retained Review had boosted the morale of Retained staff. Members also expressed their appreciation of the work undertaken by staff in developing Community Fire Safety. As well as providing advice on fire safety, the work had a more social aspect with officers being able to refer people to appropriate support agencies.

**Resolved:** *that Members*

- a) *Note the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project; and*
- b) *Approve the transfer of £75,000 of the Retained Review budget from the Retained Support Officer element to the Community Fire Safety element.*

Councillor Picken left the meeting at this point (2.45 pm).

## **19 Integrated Risk Management Planning Members' Working Group Update**

This report advised Members of the progress made by the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Members' Working Group (the Group) towards the implementation of the improvements required by the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2006/07. It also asked Members to approve the recommendations made by the Group at its meeting held on 27 June 2006 and in addition sought delegated authority for the Group to approve the draft Action Plan 2007/08 and commence this year's IRMP consultation process.

Members congratulated the officers working on the IRMP on their achievements so far and offered their support for the proposals contained in the report.

Members were informed that work undertaken by the IRMP team on night shift working had indicated that the 2.7% inefficiency identified could be reduced by measures, such as reviewing shift patterns, and without making changes to conditions of service.

It was also reported that risks could be reduced by not responding to some incidents under a blue light.

A provisional programme of dates for the IRMP consultation process was circulated (a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes), and all Members were invited to attend these sessions.

**Resolved:** *that Members*

- a) *Note the progress made towards the implementation of the Fire Authority's IRMP Action Plan 2006/07;*
- b) *Approve the proposals put forward by the IRMP Members' Working Group for changes to the service to be consulted upon as part of the draft Action Plan 2007/08, and specifically to:*
  - i *Relocate one appliance from Telford Central to Tweedale;*
  - ii *Implement a twelve-month pilot project involving a Small Fires Unit, based at Tweedale, to cover the whole of the Telford area; and*
  - iii *Determine whether there is a need for additional response standards for incidents not covered by the Fire Authority's current standards;*
- c) *Delegate responsibility for the creation of the draft Action Plan 2007/08 to the Group;*



- d) *Delegate responsibility for the IRMP consultation process, to be conducted between August and November 2006, to the Group; and*
- e) *Note that all Members of the Fire Authority are invited to attend any of the IRMP consultation sessions.*

## 20 Corporate Risk Management Summary

This was the first Annual Risk Management Summary report to Members. Its aim was to inform Members about the corporate level risk management work undertaken during the previous twelve months, as well as summarising the risk environment in which the Service is currently operating.

An amendment to Appendix A was circulated to Members at the meeting and a leaflet on Risk Assessment for Managers was tabled (copies of both documents are attached to the signed minutes).

The Head of Performance and Risk gave a presentation on risk management awareness and the role of Members in the identification, analysis, control, monitoring and review of risks. A copy of the presentation slides is attached to the signed minutes.

In response to a question on retained pension arrangements, Members were informed by the Treasurer that no further information was available at this time, but that the level of reserves had been increased when the accounts were closed.

**Resolved:** *that Members note the content of the report.*

Councillor Drummond joined the meeting at this point (3.20 pm).

## 21 Road Safety Strategy

This report set out the research findings of a study into road traffic incidents within the County and set out where Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service could support the work of partners in reducing the number of road traffic injuries and fatalities. This work is in line with the new strategic objective, previously agreed by Members, and with guidance contained in the Fire and Rescue Service Framework Document 2006/07, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

It was reported that the Fire and Rescue Service had attended 357 road traffic collisions during 2005/06.

Members stressed the need for close co-operation with the County Council's Road Safety Team, the Police and the Ambulance Service in order to avoid a duplication of effort. In view of the tight restrictions on budgets it was important to clarify the responsibilities of the various agencies involved in this work.

It was reported that education on road safety issues could be undertaken by staff involved with community safety, and that this Service had staff working in the more isolated parts of the County. The costs to the community, as a result of injuries sustained in road traffic incidents, were considerable.

It was proposed by Councillor Eade and seconded by Councillor Morgan that recommendations a), b) and d) in the report be adopted and that a report be made to the next meeting of the Fire Authority on how money would be spent on delivering





the road safety strategy. Councillor Box requested that information also be provided on the impact of reducing other Service budgets.

Members discussed the latest budget monitoring position and heard that underspends were likely in the pay and prices contingency with the July 2006 firefighters' award coming in at less than provided, and interest on revenue balances coming in at higher levels than expected. There was also a need to examine closely the number of commitments built into the budget. Although it was too early to be sure that offsetting overspends would not occur, for example as a result of current weather conditions, it was hoped that a more definitive position could be set out in October.

The proposal on being put to the meeting was approved.

**Resolved:** *that*

- a) *The Fire Authority note the contents of the report;*
- b) *The Fire Authority agree to begin the road safety actions at forthcoming station open days at minimal cost of £3,000 to be found from existing budgets; and*
- c) *A report be made to the next meeting of the Fire Authority on what could be delivered by starting to implement the road safety strategy in the current financial year and the impact that this would have as a result of allocating money from current service budgets.*

Councillor Tandy left the meeting at this point (3.45 pm).

## **22 Falck/Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme**

This report informed Members of the progress and developments in the previously reported Falck - Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service Staff Exchange Programme.

In response to questions from Members it was reported that all members of staff had been invited to participate in the exchange programme. Two or three members of staff would be visiting Denmark each month, and a similar number of Falck employees would be visiting Shropshire.

**Resolved:** *that Members note the Programme's progress.*

### **22a Reports of the Fire Authority's Lead Members and Member Champions**

Councillor Dr Drummond gave a report on her role as the Fire Authority's Young People's Champion. Initially, she had met with Service's Youth Officer and Community Fire Safety Group Manager, and had attended Crucial Crew meetings and events at schools. Councillor Dr Drummond was, however, concerned about a recent lack of communication of information about activities and initiatives but confirmed that she and Councillor Swift were due to meet with the Head of fire Prevention. She considered that there should be an arrangement for making regular reports to the Fire Authority in order to enable issues raised to be drawn to Members' attention.





Members agreed that a programme should be drawn up for Lead Members and Member Champions to report to the Fire Authority at six monthly intervals.

**Resolved:** *that a programme be drawn up for Lead Members and Member Champions to report to the Fire Authority at six monthly intervals, with a small number of reports being submitted at each meeting.*

## **23 Local Government Act 1972**

**Resolved:** *that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for items 24 and 25 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined by the provisions of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, by virtue of paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4.*

## **24 Human Resources Committee (Paragraphs 1 and 2)**

Members received the exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 12 July 2006.

**Resolved:** *that Members note the exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 12 July 2006 and agree the recommendations at item 8.*

## **25 Corporate Risk Management (Paragraphs 3 and 4)**

Members had earlier received an open session report (report 20), which provided the Fire Authority with its first Annual Corporate Risk Management Summary. This report supplemented report 20 and was presented in closed session, as it contained information that was exempt from publication by virtue of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Having considered the contents of this report in conjunction with the Corporate Risk Summary discussed at item 20, Members

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm.

**CHAIR:**.....

**DATE:**.....

