

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Meeting held at The Civic Offices, Telford,
on Wednesday, 10 May 2006 at 2.00 pm**

Present: Councillors Lt Col Allen, Benyon, Davies, Dr Drummond, Hartin, Mrs Holyoak, Hussey, Mellings, Morgan, Picken, Mrs Swift, Tandy and West

Before the meeting commenced the Chair, on behalf of the Fire Authority, presented a Commendation Award and a Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service shield to Mr Maurice Diaper in recognition of his courageous actions, which saved the lives of two children during a fire at a neighbour's house.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Box, Eade and Lloyd.

Committee Clerk's Note

Councillor Minnery had emailed his apologies for absence but, owing to a technical delay, they had not been received in time to be tendered at the meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point. Councillor Mrs Holyoak did, however, subsequently declare a personal interest in report 16 – Co-responders: she assisted with the local co-responder scheme.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 8 February 2006.

Resolved: *that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 8 February 2006, 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 Human Resources Committee

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 21 February 2006, and considered the recommendation at item 4 regarding the process for Member personal development review.

One Member voiced concerns about putting together an individual portfolio of training and development evidence. The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the



information required was not on a level with that needed for National Vocational Qualifications but merely documents, which showed what training and development a Member had received.

Members also discussed whether the Fire Authority should pursue involvement in the West Midlands Members' Development Charter. It was agreed, however, that the process recommended by the Human Resources Committee should be given time to become embedded. When that stage had been reached Members might then consider involvement in the Charter.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the non-exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 21 February 2006; and*
- b) *Agree the recommendation at item 4 of those minutes regarding the process for Member personal development review.*

6 Strategy and Resources Committee

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 13 March 2006.

One Member asked whether a short briefing session on financial issues could be arranged for the Fire Authority. The Chief Fire Officer replied that it was intended to bring Members together in early June to discuss the final accounts and the Fire Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan. This opportunity could also be taken to brief Members on other pertinent financial issues.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 13 March 2006; and*
- b) *Agree the recommendations at items 7 and 11 of those minutes.*

7 Performance Management Committee

Members received the minutes of the Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 30 March 2006.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the minutes of the Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 30 March 2006; and*
- b) *Agree the recommendation at item 10 of those minutes.*

8 Standards Committee

Members received the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting, held on 26 April 2006.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting, held on 26 April 2006; and*



- b) *Agree the recommendation at item 5 relating to amendments to the terms of reference of the Standards Committee and to the Role Description for Independent Members of the Committee.*

9 West Midlands Regional Management Board

Members received the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board meeting, held on 27 January 2006.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board meeting held on 27 January 2006; and*
b) *Agree the recommendation at item 6/06 of those minutes.*

10 Constitutional Issues

This report highlighted the need for, and requested that Members agree, changes to:

- The name of the Performance Management Committee; and
- Representation on the West Midlands Regional Management Board and various Fire Authority committees.

The report also recommended the appointment of various Member Champions and of substitutes for the Fire Authority's representatives on the West Midlands Regional Management Board.

Resolved: *that Members agree:*

- a) *To change the name of the Fire Authority's Performance Management Committee to the Audit and Performance Management Committee;*
b) *To appoint 'Member Champions' as follows:*
- *Business Risk Management and Audit - Councillor Tandy*
 - *Procurement and Asset Management - Councillor Allen*
 - *Learning and Development - Councillor Davies*
 - *Older People - Councillor Mrs Swift;*
- c) *That the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group takes the place of the Leader of the Conservative Group on the West Midlands Regional Management Board until further notice;*
d) *To appoint the following substitutes for the Fire Authority's representatives on the West Midlands Regional Management Board:*
- *Councillor Allen (Conservative)*
 - *Councillor Box (Labour)*
 - *Councillor Mellings (Liberal Democrat);*
- e) *That the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group takes the place of the Leader of the Conservative Group on the Strategy and Resources Committee and Principal Officers' Employment Panel until further notice; and*
f) *That Councillor Davies takes the place of the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group on the Audit and Performance Management Committee until further notice.*



11 Re-Appointment of Independent Member to the Standards Committee

This report requested Members to agree that Mr Michael Tebbutt, Independent Member and Chair of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee, be re-appointed to serve a second term of office as an Independent Member of that Committee.

Members of the Standards Committee advised that Mr Tebbutt had proved to be an excellent Chair and extended their thanks to him for the work he carried out on behalf of the Fire Authority.

Resolved: *that Mr Michael Tebbutt be re-appointed to serve a second term of office as an Independent Member of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee.*

12 2005/06 Outturn and Prudential Guidelines

This report brought Members up to date with the likely revenue and capital outturn for 2005/06, and reported the prudential indicators for the year. The report also included the main issues for closing the accounts, which had been discussed with the District Auditor.

It was noted that a meeting would be held prior to the 14 June meeting of the Fire Authority to enable Members to consider in detail the issues raised in the report, prior to agreeing the final accounts.

Resolved: *that Members note the matters discussed in the report.*

13 Review of the Code of Corporate Governance and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

This report requested Members to agree and adopt the proposed Code of Corporate Governance and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy for Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority following the annual review conducted by officers.

Resolved: *that Members agree to adopt the Fire Authority's Code of Corporate Governance (attached at Appendix A to the report) and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy (attached at Appendix B to the report).*

14 Retained Review Implementation Progress and Key Worker Living Programme

This report informed Members of the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project and opportunities arising from the Key Worker Living Programme.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that letters of praise had been received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the outcomes of the Retained Review and the progress made by the Fire Authority in implementing the Review's recommendations. The local media were extremely interested in the issues raised in the report and had asked to be kept informed of any decisions made by the Fire Authority in this respect.

Members agreed that it was an anomaly that firefighters were not included in the Key Worker Living Programme and emphasised that efforts should be made locally, regionally and nationally to ensure that they were.



Finally, the Chair, on behalf of the Fire Authority, thanked the Retained Review Officer, Phil Clarke, for all of his hard work in progressing implementation of the Retained Review.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the progress of the Retained Review Implementation Project;*
- b) *Task officers with lobbying local Members of Parliament and writing to the Department of Communities and Local Government to ask for immediate action regarding the Key Worker Living Programme; and*
- c) *Lobby their constituent authorities to ensure that retained firefighters are able to access affordable housing close to fire stations by getting retained firefighters recognised as key workers in Shropshire.*

15 Shropshire Partnership

This report informed Members of the Fire Authority's invitation to become a member of the Shropshire Partnership, the benefits of being a member and the costs. The report also provided information about the actions and targets, which officers plan to deliver in support of the Local Area Agreement.

In response to a question from a Member the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the £10,000 annual contribution was put into a central fund and then used in various projects. It was not used to administer the Partnership.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Tandy that Councillor Morgan be the Fire Authority's representative on the Shropshire Partnership Board. It was then proposed by Councillor Mrs Holyoak and seconded by Councillor Benyon that Councillor Allen be the Authority's representative on the Board.

On a vote with six Members voting for Councillor Allen and seven for Councillor Morgan, it was

Resolved: *that Councillor Morgan be the Fire Authority's representative on the Shropshire Partnership Board.*

It was further resolved: *that the Fire Authority:*

- a) *Agree to join the Shropshire Partnership Board and find £10,000 for 2006/07 from the General Reserve and commit £10,000 per year for next two years to be met as a prior commitment on those years' budgets;*
- b) *Task the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Councillor Morgan to sit at board level and gain maximum benefit for the Fire Authority through the Partnership;*
- c) *Agree to the document 'Supporting Shropshire's Local Area Agreement 2006 - 2009' (attached as an appendix to the report).*

16 Co-Responder Legal Case Funding

This report sought the opinion of the Fire Authority in response to the request made by the Employers in Circular EMP/01/06 that Fire and Rescue Services share the cost of the impending legal action by Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire in relation to co-responding.

Councillor Mrs Holyoak declared a personal interest at this point: she assisted with the local co-responder scheme.



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

Resolved: *that the Fire Authority:*

- a) *Share the costs of the legal action relating to co-responding; and*
- b) *Contribute on wholetime firefighter figures, not on the number of uniformed personnel as a whole, i.e. not including Retained personnel.*

17 Audit Commission Consultation – The Fire and Rescue Service Performance Framework 2006/07

This report requested Members to note the Audit Commission's proposals for auditing fire and rescue authorities during 2006/07.

The Chief Fire Officer tabled a document entitled 'Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority Predicted Results for the Performance Information Element of 2006 Service Assessment' (a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes). He explained that, using the thresholds proposed by the Audit Commission, this Fire Authority could demonstrate that it was providing a good service to the people of Shropshire. He recommended that Members support the process proposed by the Audit Commission but he warned that it might change as a result of pressure from larger fire authorities.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the contents of the report, appended consultation document and tabled document;*
- b) *Delegate authority to the Strategy and Resources Committee to receive and, if considered acceptable, approve a response on behalf of the Fire Authority to the consultation exercise; and*
- c) *Receive at the Fire Authority's next meeting (14 June 2006) an update on the proposed Audit Commission's performance framework arrangements, identifying expected audit dates and Member/officer involvement, where applicable.*

18 Key Performance Indicators

The Audit Commission had recently published a consultation document, which set out its proposals for auditing fire and rescue authorities during 2006/07. The audit would take account of selected nationally verified best value performance indicators as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), set by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, to contribute to the overall audit score. This report informed Members of the relevant KPIs and summarised the Fire Authority's performance.

Resolved: *that Members note the report.*

19 Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2006-08

Members were advised that the previously delayed Fire and Rescue Service National Framework had now been published. The recently released document contained several changes to the earlier circulated draft consultation Framework Document. Those changes, which were being fully assessed from both a local and regional perspective, would be brought to the Fire Authority at its next meeting on 14 June 2006. A copy of the National Framework could be downloaded from the Fire Authority's website: www.shropshirefire.gov.uk

Resolved: *that Members note the update given on the agenda.*



20 Integrated Risk Management Planning

The Chief Fire Officer provided a verbal update on the latest developments in the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP). It was noted that the IRMP Working Group had met in February and provided direction for officers to follow. In April the Chair of the Fire Authority and Chair of the Working Group had met representatives of all of the unions and a working group with representatives from each of the Brigade's twelve watches had now been formed so that their views could feed into the IRMP process.

Resolved: *that Members note the verbal report of the Chief Fire Officer.*

21 ISO 9001 Certification

This report advised Members of the achievement of ISO 9001:2000 Registration for Resources Management activities within the Service.

Members congratulated officers on having achieved the ISO 9001:2000 Registration.

Resolved: *that Members note the achievement of ISO 9001:2000 and that the Service would review its applicability in other areas.*

22 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service - Falck Staff Exchange Programme

This report advised Members of an innovative and unique opportunity that had arisen to exchange staff of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service with staff of Denmark's foremost provider of emergency services - Falck, through the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci Community Vocational Training Action Programme.

Members congratulated Assistant Chief Fire Officer Steve Worrall on having gained funding from the European Union.

Resolved: *that Members:*

- a) *Note the contents of this report; and*
- b) *Receive further updates on the benefits achieved through the European Communion funded Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service – Falck Staff Exchange Programme.*

23 Fire Conference and Exhibition 2006

The 2006 Fire Conference and Exhibition would take place on 8 and 9 November at the International Centre, Telford. On 20 July 2005 the Fire Authority agreed that the Chief Fire Officer and whoever was the Chair at the time should attend this Conference. Tickets for the Exhibition could be obtained at minimal or nil cost and it was, therefore, recommended that as many Members as possible attend.

Resolved: *that as many Members as possible attend the 2006 Fire Exhibition.*



24 Local Government Act 1972

Resolved: *that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting 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 12A to the Act, by virtue of the paragraphs specified against them.*

25 Human Resources Committee (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)

Members received the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 21 February 2006.

Resolved: *that the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 21 February 2006 be noted.*

26 FiReControl Governance Arrangements: Consultation on Detailed Proposals (Paragraphs 3 and 5)

Report 26 informed Members about the proposals for governance of the new Regional Fire Controls and asked for Members' guidance and support for the consultation response on the key questions in the document. Report 26a, which had been written following the briefing session attended by Members on 25 May 2006, set out the issues discussed by Members at that time and the proposed responses to the questions asked in the consultation document.

Members, who had attended the briefing session, agreed that report 26a provided an accurate summary of the issues discussed.

Having reflected on the information contained in the consultation document produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the information received in the seminar on 5 May, the Fire Authority

Resolved: *that it:*

- a) *Agree the responses to the consultation questions set out in report 26a;*
- b) *Task officers to reply to the consultation directly to the Department for Communities and Local Government (the successor to the ODPM) and share the response with the West Midlands Regional Management Board; and*
- c) *Await the outcome of the consultation before identifying its preferred option for governance of the Local Authority Controlled Company in advance of setting up the Company in January 2007.*

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm.

CHAIR:.....

DATE:.....

