

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held at Shropshire Education and Conference Centre, Shrewsbury  
at 2.00 pm on Friday, 3 July 2009**

**Present**

**Members**

Councillors Adams, Mrs Barrow, Davies, Mrs Greenaway, Groom, Hartin, Kiernan, Mason, Mellings, Minnery (Vice-Chair), Picken, Roberts and West (Chair)

**Officers**

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Worrall, Head of Resources, Treasurer, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Corporate Services Manager, Principal Accountant, Head of Performance and Risk, Integrated Risk Manager and Management Support Officer

**1 Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Barrow and seconded by Councillor Hartin

That Councillor West be elected Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until immediately after the election of Chair at the next Annual Meeting.

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

**2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Greenaway and seconded by Councillor Adams

That Councillor Minnery be appointed Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority to hold office until immediately after the appointment of Vice-Chair at the next Annual Meeting.

As Councillor Minnery is a Member of Shropshire Council, it was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Mellings and

**Resolved** that Standing Order 2 Part 2:

“In the year when the Chair is a Member of Shropshire County Council the Vice Chair shall be a Member of Borough of Telford & Wrekin and vice versa” be suspended

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

### **3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Dr Jones, Price and Dr Winchester.

The Chair welcomed new Members to the Fire Authority and welcomed back previous Members. He added that longstanding Members of the Fire Authority were prepared to act as mentors to new Members to assist them in settling into their new role.

The Chair also welcomed Paul Raymond to his first meeting of the Fire Authority as Chief Fire Officer.

### **4 Declarations of Interest**

The Chair reminded Members that they should declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests at this point and that they should leave the meeting room before any item, in which they had a prejudicial interest, was discussed.

No interests were declared.

### **5 Non-Exempt Minutes**

It was proposed by Councillor Picken, seconded by Councillor Mrs Greenaway and

**Resolved** that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 29 April 2009, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

It was proposed by Councillor Mellings, seconded by Councillor Mason and

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting, held on 22 May 2009, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

### **6 Public Questions**

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

### **7 Constitutional Issues**

#### **7a Process for Dealing with Brigade Managers' Pay**

This report informed the Fire Authority of the review of the process for undertaking Brigade Managers' pay negotiations and made a number of recommendations in the light of the review.

Annexes 1, 2 and 3 to Appendix B of the report had inadvertently been omitted and were, therefore, tabled (copies of which are attached to the signed minutes).

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Delegate authority for reviewing and deciding Brigade Managers' pay to the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel;
- b) Refer any disagreement by Brigade Managers directly to ACAS (Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Service) for conciliation, and then to an ACAS independent person;
- c) Agree to be bound by the decision of that independent person;
- d) Ask the Treasurer to undertake a pay review, as outlined in the ACAS report, as soon as possible to complete the January 2009 pay settlement; and
- e) Agree to the same process being used to deal with the Treasurer's pay

The Corporate Services Manager advised that, because the Panel now had delegated powers, it was necessary to amend its terms of reference. She read out the existing terms of reference and new terms of reference for Members' consideration.

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

**Resolved** that the terms of reference of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel be amended to:

'To meet as and when required to review the pay and conditions of service of Brigade Managers in accordance with the process agreed by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 3 July 2009, as may be amended by the Fire Authority from time to time, and, having carried out a review, to make decisions relating to the pay and conditions of service of Brigade Managers'

## **7b Member Appointments and Constitution of Committees**

This report asked the Fire Authority to agree allocations of seats on its committees to political groups, appointments to Committees and outside bodies, appointment of Member Champions and the Terms of Reference for each of its Committees. It also sought the appointment of its representative on the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Assembly and Fire Services Forum.

The Corporate Services Manager advised that, following publication of the report, it had been necessary to revisit the allocation of seats to political groups, because of a change in groups at Telford & Wrekin Council. Councillor Williams, an Independent Member, was no longer a Member of the Fire Authority and his place had been taken by Councillor Groom, who had allied himself with the Liberal Democrat Group. A revised Appendix A – Allocation of Seats to Political Groups – was, therefore, tabled. A matrix, indicating proposed committee membership and any vacancies was also tabled. Copies of both documents are attached to the signed minutes.

Councillor Hartin informed the Fire Authority that, because of recent changes in membership, there was now no main opposition group. The Labour Group and Liberal Democrat/Independent Group had, however, agreed that the Leader of the Liberal Democrat/ Independent Group would head up the opposition for the next two years and the Leader of the Labour Group would head up the opposition for the following two years.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree that the political balance requirements do not apply to the Fire Authority's representation on the West Midlands Regional Management Board but that they do apply to the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel;
- b) Agree the allocation of seats on its committees to political groups (as set out in the tabled document revised Appendix A);
- c) Agree:
  - The appointment of Members to serve on committees, as set out in the tabled matrix, and that Councillors Davies and Minnery fill the two Conservative vacancies on the Standards Committee

**Committee Clerk's Note**

The matrix incorrectly showed Cllr Mrs Barrow as a member of the Budget Working Group and omitted to show Cllr Roberts as a member of that Group, although he is a member of Strategy and Resources Committee and Cllr Mrs Barrow is not (membership of the Budget Working Group and Strategy and Resources Committee is the same).

- That representation on the West Midlands Regional Management Board be provided by the Chair, Vice-Chair and Councillor Hartin, as the lead of the opposition groups, with Councillors Mrs Barrow, Davies and Dr Jones acting as their respective Substitute Members
  - That representation on West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited be provided by the Chair, with the Vice-Chair acting as Substitute
  - That power to appoint to any remaining vacancies be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the relevant Group Leaders
- d) Agree the appointment of existing Member Champions, as set out in Appendix C to the report, and appoint the following new Champions:
    - Asset and Procurement Champion - Cllr Minnery
    - Learning and Development – Cllr Groom

- Vulnerable Persons Champion - Cllr Davies

and delegate the appointment of ICT Champion to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair

#### **Committee Clerk's Note**

A Member Champion for Children and Young People was not appointed, as this issue was discussed later at item 7d on the agenda.

- e) Agree the Terms of Reference for each Committee, as set out in Appendix D, with the exception of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel, which had already been agreed at item 7a on the agenda; and
- f) Appoint the Chair as the Fire Authority's representative on the Local Government Association Annual Assembly and Fire Services Forum

### **7c Review of Scheme of Delegation to Officers and of Standing Orders**

This report reviewed the Fire Authority's Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders and asked the Authority to agree proposed amendments.

In accordance with the Fire Authority's Standing Orders any amendments proposed would stand adjourned until the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

The Corporate Services Manager referred to Standing Orders for the Regulations of Proceedings and Business and specifically Standing Order 2.2. As this was the third consecutive year, in which the Fire Authority had agreed to suspend Standing Order 2.2, it would seem sensible for it to be permanently deleted.

Members reviewed the Scheme of Delegation to Officers; Standing Orders for the Regulations of Proceedings and Business; Standing Orders relating to Contracts; and Financial Regulations Standing Orders.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the proposed amendments to:

- Standing Orders for the Regulations of Proceedings and Business, specifically that Standing Order 2.2 be deleted; and
- Standing Orders relating to Contracts

### **7d Review of Member Role Descriptions**

This report requested Members to review, and agree proposed amendments to, the Fire Authority's existing Member Role Descriptions and agree the new Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Mellings felt that for consistency there should be Role Descriptions for all Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs. The Corporate Services Manager confirmed that these appeared as actions on the committee work plans and would be introduced for consideration by the appropriate committee in accordance with the plans. They would then be brought to the Fire Authority for approval.

**Subject to** deletion of 'in the media' in existing role descriptions at the bullet point 'To represent the Fire Authority and its policies to the media in a positive and professional manner', it was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Mrs Greenaway and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree:

- The proposed amendments to existing Role Descriptions, outlined at section 4 of the report; and
- The new Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, attached at Appendix B

## **8 Strategy and Resources Committee**

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 21 May 2009.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 21 May 2009, be noted

## **9 Human Resources Committee**

Members received the non-exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 28 May 2009.

**Resolved** that the non-exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 28 May 2009, be noted

## **10 Member Champion Presentation**

Councillor West was due to give a presentation to the Fire Authority on his work as Vulnerable Persons Champion. In view of the lengthy agenda for this meeting the presentation was, however, postponed.

## **11a Statement of Accounts 2008/09**

This report presented the Statement of Accounts 2008/09 for approval by the Fire Authority, and sought specific approval to a number of virements from the General Fund in 2009/10.

Immediately prior to the Fire Authority meeting the Treasurer and Principal Accountant had conducted a seminar, at which Members had considered the Statement of Accounts in detail and been given the opportunity to ask questions.

The Treasurer brought Members' attention to the valuation of assets and, in particular, land valuation. He was currently in discussion with the Fire Authority's valuer regarding this issue, which could result in changes to asset values, but would not make any practical difference to the Fire Authority.

The Treasurer pointed out that there were a number of virements (at section 4 of his report) to be approved by the Fire Authority. One of them, however, relating to an upgrade of Wide Area Network connectivity, was the subject of report 11b on the agenda.

**Subject to** the exclusion of the virement for £12,000 referred to above, it was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Minnery and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Approve the Statement of Accounts 2008/09, attached as an appendix, subject to incorporating the Annual Governance Statement and to audit;
- b) Authorise the Treasurer to make any final adjustments, subject to reporting these to the next meeting of the Authority; and
- c) Approve the virements set out in paragraph 4i - £341,000, 4iii - £125,000 (subject to exclusion of the virement of £12,000 referred to above) and 4v - £432,000

## **11b Wide Area Network Upgrade**

This report set out proposals and revenue consequences to upgrade the Service's existing wide area communications network.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer emphasised the vulnerability of Fire Control, should the network fail, hence his recommendation to upgrade the existing Wide Area Network.

Councillor Hartin was concerned that 10 Mb capacity might soon prove to be insufficient. He felt that this was an opportunity for the Fire Authority to consider even greater capacity, which would increase the speed and flexibility of transmissions. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that 100 Mb would offer greater functionality, the additional revenue cost for which would be £7,000 per annum. The installation cost would remain at £12,000 and the additional revenue costs would be found from existing budgets.

After some discussion regarding the benefits, which 100 Mb capacity would bring, it was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Mrs Barrow and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve:

- a) An upgrade to 100mb to the existing WAN;
- b) £12,000 for installation costs met by the General Fund, and £43,000 for annual running costs, met from savings in the Communications Budget; and
- c) The proposed exemption to Fire Authority's Standing Order 9, subject to the approval of the Chair and Treasurer

The Fire Authority then revisited report 11a in the light of the above decision. It was proposed by Councillor Minnery, seconded by Councillor Hartin and

**Resolved** that the figures in report 11a be agreed, subject to amendment, if necessary, to take into account the increased revenue costs of £7,000 per annum agreed by the Fire Authority

## **12 Annual Governance Statement 2008/09**

This report asked the Fire Authority formally to approve the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2008/09, which must be included as part of the Statement of Accounts 2008/09. It also asked Members formally to approve the AGS Improvement Plan 2009/10.

It was proposed by Councillor Groom, seconded by Councillor Mason and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Accept and sign-off the Annual Governance Statement 2008/09; and
- b) Approve the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2009/10

## **13 Medium Term Financial Plan 2009/10 to 2013/14**

This report sought the Fire Authority's approval to the contents and publication of the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2009/10 to 2013/14.

Prior to the Fire Authority meeting the Chief Fire Officer had given a presentation on the Medium Term Financial Plan, at which Members had been given the opportunity to discuss its contents and ask questions.



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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Approve the MTFP, attached as an Appendix to the report; and
- b) Delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to make minor amendments to the MTFP prior to publication, if necessary

## 14 Formula Grant Review

This report informed Members of the current review of the Fire and Rescue Relative Needs Formula, used in the formula grant distribution system. It also proposed some basic responses to five questions raised by Communities and Local Government concerning options for a new formula.

It was proposed by Councillor Groom, seconded by Councillor Picken and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the ongoing review of the Grant and the uncertainty this brings for 2011/12 onwards;
- b) Agree the basic responses, set out in paragraph 4 of the report; and
- c) Delegate approval to the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the Chair, to add to these responses, if further information became available before 20 July 2009

## 15 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy

This report requested Members to agree and adopt the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy for the Fire Authority, following the annual review conducted by officers.

The Corporate Services Manager advised that, on page 2 of the Strategy under the heading 'Members', there was a reference to the Standards Board for England, which was now incorrect. She asked if Members would agree the Strategy but delegate authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to make the necessary correction.

It was proposed by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Picken and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree and adopt the Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy, attached as an appendix to the report, subject to correction of the reference to the Standards Board for England by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair

## 16 Integrated Strategic Planning Process 2010/11

This report outlined how the Service would continue to align service, financial and improvement planning, the result of which would culminate in the publication of the 2010/11 Corporate Plan.

A new appendix to the report was tabled (a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes), as pages in the existing appendix were missing.

The Chair emphasised the importance of Members attending committee meetings. In the past it had been necessary to cancel some meetings, as they had not been quorate, which had made it difficult to meet some of the deadlines within the timetable. Officers undertook to forward a list of scheduled meetings to all Members so they could enter them into their diaries.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Endorse the process and note the key milestones;
- b) Recognise the interdependency behind service, budget and improvement planning; and
- c) Note the outline proposals for medium-term service planning from 2011/12 and beyond

## 17 Integrated Risk Management Planning

This report advised Members of the progress made towards implementing the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Action Plan 2009/10. It also asked Members to approve the IRMP 2010/11 Proposed Actions document and to consider and, if appropriate, approve the IRMP Consultation Strategy 2010/11.

A Stakeholder Map, setting out the consultation process, was tabled (a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes).

In presenting his report, the Integrated Risk Manager advised Members that their involvement in IRMP, and particularly the consultation process, had been held up by the Audit Commission as best practice. A timetable for this year's consultation would be sent to Members and all were invited to attend any of the meetings.

Chair of the IRMP Members Working Group, Councillor Minnery, emphasised the benefits of Members' attending in their own division. It provided an opportunity to meet crews at their local fire station and gave an excellent insight into the work of the Fire Authority. In addition, firefighters did appreciate the presence of Members.

Councillor Hartin remarked that there were no consultation meetings planned with Local Joint Committees and asked whether there was any way, in which the Fire Authority could engage with them. The Chair replied that, if there were a specific issue, which affected a particular area, the appropriate committee would be consulted.

The Chief Fire Officer added that it was his intention to arrange for the Fire Authority to have representation eventually on all of the Local Joint Committees. In the meantime officers would write to Shropshire Local Joint Committees, Shropshire Council Safer and Stronger Communities – North, Central and South, and Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council Local Strategic Partnerships, offering to give IRMP presentations.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the work being progressed towards implementing the IRMP Action Plan 2009/10;
- b) Approve the IRMP Proposed Actions 2010/11 document (Appendix 1);
- c) Approve the IRMP Consultation Strategy 2010/11 (Appendix 2); and
- d) Note that all Members of the Fire Authority were invited to attend any of the IRMP presentations

## **18 Shrewsbury Refurbishment – Procurement Approach**

This report sought approval for the recommended procurement approach for the Shrewsbury Station redevelopment.

Councillor Mason referred to mention in the report that the Fire Authority might obtain a bond from the contractor guaranteeing completion of the work. In the current economic climate he felt that this was essential in order to protect the Fire Authority. The Head of Resources replied that this would need to be considered in terms of best value. The Chief Fire Officer added that the cost of such a bond would be included in the final refurbishment costings to be brought to Members for approval.

It was proposed by Councillor Groom, seconded by Councillor Picken and

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority approve the use of Telford & Wrekin Borough Council's Contract Procedure Rules in the procurement of a contractor to carry out the refurbishment of Shrewsbury Station

## **19 Annual Report 2008/09**

This report sought Member approval of the proposed contents and format of the Fire Authority Annual Report 2008/09.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer circulated a summary version of last year's Annual Report (a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes), advising that this year's would be similar.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Approve the draft contents and format of the proposed Annual Report; and
- b) Delegate final approval of the Annual Report to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair

## **20 Outcomes of Partnership Working**

This report provided Members with an evaluation of partnership working within the Brigade. The appendices, referred to in the report, were not attached because of their length, but were accessible via the Fire Authority's website. Copies were also available at the meeting for Members to view.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report

## **21 Corporate Risk Management Summary**

This was the fourth Annual Corporate Risk Management Summary Report to Members. These reports aim to inform Members about the corporate level risk management work, undertaken during the previous twelve months, and summarise the risk environment in which the Service is currently operating.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report

## **22 Local Government Act 1972**

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

**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 12(A) to the Act, by virtue of Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4

## **23 Corporate Risk Management Summary – Exempt Information (Paragraphs 3 and 4)**

The Authority had already received an open session report, which summarised its current exposure to corporate risk. This report supplemented that one and contained information, which is exempt from publication by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of labour relation difficulties being experienced by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, as a result of its attempts to alter shift patterns. He also outlined the staff implications of Regional Control Centres (RCCs). Councillor Hartin added that there was likely to be a ministerial announcement regarding RCCs in the near future. He asked that staff be advised without delay when such an announcement were made.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report, in conjunction with the Corporate Risk Management Summary, considered in open session

## **24 Exempt Minutes (Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

Members received the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 29 April 2009.

It was proposed by Councillor Picken, seconded by Councillor Mason and

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 29 April 2009, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

### **Committee Clerk's Note**

Although the agenda asked Members to agree the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority Extraordinary Meeting, held on 22 May 2009, there were no exempt minutes for that meeting.

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

Members received the exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 28 May 2009.

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 28 May 2009, be noted

The meeting closed at 3.35 pm

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....