

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 14 October 2009, at 2.00 pm
at AFC Telford United Learning Centre, Wellington**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams, Davies, Mrs Greenaway, Groom, Hartin, Dr Jones, Kiernan, Mason, Mellings, Minnery (Vice-chair), Picken, Price, Roberts, West (Chair), Williams, Dr Winchester

Officers

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Officer, Treasurer, Corporate Services Manager, Management Support Officer, Clerk and Monitoring Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Barrow.

The Chair welcomed Mr Matt Lamb, the local Fire Brigades Union Secretary, and Mr Michael Tebbutt, the Independent Chair of Standards Committee, who were attending the meeting as observers.

2 Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded 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.

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting, held on 3 July 2009.

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

Resolved that the minutes of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting, held on 3 July 2009, 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 Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 3 September 2009, and considered the recommendations at items 9, 10 and 13.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 3 September 2009, and agree the recommendations at items 9, 10 and 13

6 Audit and Performance Management Committee

Members received the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 10 September 2009.

Resolved that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 10 September 2009, be noted

7 Strategy and Resources Committee

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 23 September 2009, and considered the recommendations at items 7, 9 and 10. The reports relating to items 7, 9 and 10 had been provided to Members.

It was noted that recommendations a) and b) at item 7 of the minutes were the subject of report 12, which was to be considered later on the agenda for the meeting.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 23 September 2009, and (with the exception of recommendations a) and b) at item 7) agree the recommendations at items 7, 9 and 10

8 West Midlands Regional Management Board

Members received the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board (the Board), held on 23 July 2009, and considered the recommendations at items 18/09 and 20 to 23/09.

In response to a statement from Councillor Hartin about the winding down of the Board, the Chair advised that the Board had decided against dissolution for the time being, as it might be called upon to deal with emerging issues.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the minutes of the West Midlands Regional Management Board meeting, held on 23 July 2009, and agree the recommendations at items 18/09 and 20 to 23/09.

9 Proposed Meeting Schedule 2010

This document advised Members of the 2010 meeting dates for the Fire Authority and its Committees.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the 2010 meeting dates for the Fire Authority and its Committees

10 Review of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and of Standing Orders

Members received the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders, which were agreed at, and stood adjourned from, the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the amendments to the Fire Authority's Scheme of Delegation to Officers and Standing Orders (as set out at paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report), which were agreed at and stand adjourned from, the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority, held in July 2009

11 Committee Rationalisation

This report proposed the merger of several committees of the Fire Authority, following recommendations made by the Human Resources Committee at its meeting on 3 September 2009. The report also asked Members to make various decisions relating to those recommendations.

Referring to the proposed constitution of the new Appeals Committee, the Corporate Services Manager advised that the suggestion was that the Committee would consist of only three Members each time it met, hence the quorum of three. This would assist in arranging meetings to deal with appeals as quickly as possible and would also be less intimidating for employees than a full committee of seven.

During a discussion about political balance requirements the Clerk advised that, wherever possible, the Committee should be politically balanced, whatever its size. Members agreed that such balance should be obtained where practicable, but that unreasonable delays in hearing appeals must be avoided.

The Corporate Services Manager asked if the final recommendation d) in the report could be more specific in that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Officer and Corporate Services Manager, rather than 'officers'.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree:

- a) The recommendation of its Human Resources Committee that the current three committees, known as the 'Health Panel', the 'Appeals Committee' and the 'Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal' be merged into one committee to be known as the 'Appeals Committee';
- b) The constitution of the new Appeals Committee, including that it consist of only three Members each time it met;
- c) The allocation of seats to political groups, set out at Appendix C, including a resolution (under section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989) that the political balance requirements do not apply to the West Midlands Regional Management Board; and
- d) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Officer and Corporate Services Manager to review and amend the existing procedures used by the current three committees, in order to ensure consistency in the operation of the new Appeals Committee

12 Role of the Integrated Risk Management Planning Working Group

This report sought the Fire Authority's approval to recommendations made by its Strategy and Resources Committee on the role of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Members' Working Group.

Whilst in agreement with all of the other recommendations made in the report, Councillor Mrs Greenaway was concerned that the proposed new name did not reflect the important role, which the Group would continue to have in integrated risk management planning. After some discussion Members agreed that a more appropriate title would be 'Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group'.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree to extend the terms of reference of the IRMP Working Group to cover consideration of all major issues effecting service levels and the financial position of the Authority, in particular potential service developments and reductions, efficiencies and major capital projects;
- b) Amend the reporting process of the IRMP Working Group so that it reports directly to the Strategy and Resources Committee;
- c) Change the Group's name to the 'Strategic Risk and Planning Working Group'; and
- d) Agree the constitution of the Group as detailed in the report

13 Code of Corporate Governance

This report introduced a new Code of Corporate Governance to the Fire Authority for consideration and adoption.

Referring to the section on 'Consultation and Communication' on page 13 of the draft Code, Councillor Groom voiced his concern that there was no reference to the trades unions. As critical stakeholders in the Fire and Rescue Service, they should be mentioned in one of the first bullet points.

Councillor Groom then went on to ask whether, at section 3.1.2 at page 16 of the draft Code, instead of listing the three Equality Schemes: Gender, Disability and Race, reference could be made to the Single Equality Scheme, which was currently being developed. The Assistant Chief Officer responded that the draft Single Equality Scheme was now complete and would be brought before Members for agreement. The timing was, therefore, right to include it.

Subject to the above, it was proposed by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Hartin and

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree to adopt formally the Code of Corporate Governance 2009/10

14 Member Champions

Equality and Diversity Champion

Councillor Dr Jones gave a presentation on her activities over the past year as Equality and Diversity Champion and circulated her presentation slides (a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes).

During her presentation Councillor Dr Jones referred to the Members' Equality Charter. She had copies of it with her and asked if all those Members, who had not already done so, would sign up to it.

A discussion took place about the benefits of equality and diversity to the community and Fire Authority's employees and, in particular, how knowledge of the customs and practices of minority groups assisted operational staff in their day-to-day work.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the presentation of its Equality and Diversity Champion

Information and Communications Technology Champion

At its Annual Meeting in July, the Fire Authority agreed to delegate the appointment of the Information and Communications Technology Champion to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair. As the position had not yet been filled, the Fire Authority was asked to make an appointment. In addition, on the recommendation of its auditors, the Fire Authority was asked to widen the role to include responsibility for data quality. A copy of the Role Description, including the proposed amendments, had been provided to Members and is attached to the signed minutes.

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

Resolved that:

- a) The Role Description for the Member Champion for Information and Communications Technology and Data Quality (ICTDQ) be approved; and
- b) Councillor Minnery be appointed as ICTDQ Champion

15 Annual Report of the Audit and Performance Management Committee

This report advised Members of the work carried out by the Fire Authority's Audit and Performance Management Committee since October 2008.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the report

16 Supporting Local Area Agreements across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin 2009 - 2011

This report set out the current position of the Authority and its Service in supporting the Local Area Agreements (LAA) for both Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin areas.

Councillor Groom referred to the two Shropshire authorities: Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council, and the confusion, which sometimes arose when referring to the area covered by the Fire Authority, i.e. the County as a whole. He asked if officers would find a consistent approach to how they described this area.

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

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the document 'Supporting Local Area Agreements across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin 2009 – 2011', set out at the appendix to the report;
- b) Agree the current position of the Service; and
- c) Task officers with communicating to Members any significant changes in the provision of support to the Local Area Agreements

17 Local Government Act 1972

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

Resolved that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it 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 and 2.

18 Human Resources Committee (Paragraphs 1 and 2)

Members received the exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 3 September 2009.

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 3 September 2009, be noted

The meeting closed at 3.00 pm

Chair.....

Date.....