

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 14 December 2016, at 2.00 pm
at Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams, Barnes, Carter (Vice-Chair), Hartin, Hosken, Hurst-Knight, Dr Jones, Mellings, Murray, Price, Roberts, Turley, West (Chair) and Wynn

Officers

Rod Hammerton	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Louise McKenzie	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	ACFO
Andy Johnson	Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer	T/ACFO
Jonathan Eatough	Clerk to the Fire Authority	Clerk
James Walton	Fire Authority Treasurer	Treasurer
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO

External Bodies

John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner	PCC
Deborah Moseley	Democratic and Scrutiny Services, Telford & Wrekin Council	

The Chair welcomed the PCC to the meeting and invited him to say a few words to the Fire Authority. The PCC explained that he was keen to work with the Fire Authority because of the relationships and understanding that already exist between it and West Mercia Police and the joint working that is already undertaken between Shropshire and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Services. The PCC expressed his wish to be an active partner and operate as team with the Fire Authority, building on the good foundations that already exist. Co-operation and collaboration now will help with enabling any future legislation regarding PCCs.

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Barrow and Pinter. Councillor Minnery did not attend the meeting.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Price declared an interest in item 10 on the agenda as he is in receipt of a firefighter pension and was operationally involved in an incident related to the issues in the report.

3 Public Questions

None

4 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Fire Authority Meeting, held on 5 October 2016, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5 Meeting Schedule 2017

The Fire Authority received a schedule of proposed dates for 2017 meetings of the Fire Authority and its committees for approval.

This will be revisited at the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority in June 2017, as new Members may have been appointed, following the Annual Meetings of Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Councils. At this time officers will present a schedule from June 2017 to May 2018, which will tie in with the planning of meetings by the two Councils.

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the draft Meeting Schedule 2017.

6 Standards and Human Resources Committee

Resolved that Members note the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 18 October 2016.

7 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 10 November 2016 and considered the recommendation at item 5 of those minutes.

Members queried what the legal fees, referred to on page 2 of report 7a, related to. The CFO explained that they related to a successful prosecution which had arisen from fire investigation work that had been undertaken into a serious incident in Oswestry. A specialist lawyer had been engaged to work on the case and the defendant had received a two year suspended sentence.

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 10 November 2016, be noted and the recommendations at item 5, as given below, be agreed.

Item 5 – Financial Performance to September 2016, including Annual Treasury Review 2015/16 and Mid-Year Treasury Review 2016/17

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve virements to the revenue budget, where requested;
- c) Approve the change in frequency of capital activity reports to the Committee and note the update on capital schemes;
- d) Note the annual review of treasury activities for 2015/16;
- e) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2016/17; and
- f) Note the mid-year review of treasury activities for 2016/17.

8 2017/18 and Later Years Budget Summary

This report summarised the budgets that are proposed by the Strategy and Resources Committee. The results are put forward to the Fire Authority for approval as the basis for consultation, leading to a final decision at the Fire Authority meeting in February 2017.

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Agree to base its revenue budget planning and consultation on the totals set out in section 3 of this report;
- b) Agree the recommendations on Reserves and Provisions, set out in report 6 of the Appendix to the report, and confirm the general reserve; and
- c) Request the Strategy and Resources Committee to prepare a final budget package in February 2017, for final decision by the Fire Authority in February 2017.

9 Review of Financial Regulations

This report asked members to consider and agree the draft Financial Regulations and the updated virement and debt write off levels, following officer review.

Members queried if virements would go through a Committee. The HoF confirmed that, where appropriate, virements will be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Having considered the revised Financial Regulations and approve their adoption; and
- b) Having considered the proposed changes to virement levels and debt write off levels and approve their adoption.

Councillor Price left the meeting at this point (2.25 pm)

10 Injury Awards – Identification of Overpayment

This report set out the context of, and proposals to deal with, recently identified overpayments of injury award pension payments to a small number of retained firefighters.

Members expressed concern about the reference, in the report, to fraud. The ACFO explained the circumstances, as set out in the report, that had led to the overpayments being identified and also confirmed that she had met with each of the retired firefighters, that are affected, to explain the situation and what actions the Service would be taking, to them. Whilst there is no implication that fraud had been carried out, the Fire Authority does need to be certain that this is the case hence the inclusion of the final sentence of recommendation b).

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority

- a) Agree to write off a total of approximately £57,468.03 of overpayments to pensioners that cannot be legally enforced because of statutory time limits; and
- b) Delegate consideration of each of the four cases to the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Audit and Performance Management Committee in consultation with the Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) allowing them to determine whether, following full investigation, write off or recovery of overpayment made within the statutory time limit is appropriate on a case by case basis. Such consideration shall include whether any concealment or fraud was identified in which case full recovery shall be sought.

Councillor Price returned to the meeting at this point (2.35 pm)

11 Integrated Risk Management Plan Projects Update

This report updated Members on the progress made against its Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Projects and, in relation to IRMP 3, sought approval from Members for the current feasibility study to be updated to reflect the additional opportunities identified for working with Warwickshire and West Mercia Police.

Members acknowledged the work that had gone into the IRMP Projects so far and recognised that the consultation process had paid dividends with regard to driving the projects forward. Members also commended the interaction of both employees and the Fire Brigades Union with regard to the changes that are taking place.

Referring to IRMP 3 – Telford Central Redevelopment, the PCC commented that he was happy to support the proposed involvement of West Mercia Police, particularly as it was easy to see obvious advantages, for example road traffic collision training. The PCC further commented that he had visited Newport Fire Station which he considered to be a good example of grass roots co-operation and collaboration.

Resolved unanimously that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the progress made against the three Integrated Risk Management Plan Projects; and
- b) Approve the updating of the current Telford Central feasibility study, with these costs being borne by the Service; and
- c) Give authority to the Chief Fire Officer for approving the costs incurred for updating the feasibility study.

12 Details of Lives Saved and those Protected from Harm

This paper highlighted the number of people, who had been protected from harm, or rescued by operational crews during April to November 2016. The paper also attempted to provide an economic value for the rescue work carried out by the Fire Service.

The T/ACFO explained that if it is assumed that current trends will continue, it is likely that the total amount of lives saved will be circa £48m for 2016/17 which will be a reduction from last year.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the paper

13 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Mr Johnson (T/ACFO) left the meeting at this point (3.00 pm)

14 Appointment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)

This report asked the Fire Authority to ratify the decision of its Brigade Managers' Employment Panel on the appointment of a new Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Resolved that the Fire Authority ratify the recommendation of the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel that Mr Andrew Johnson, currently Area Manager at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, should be appointed to the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer, subject to the usual employment checks.

Mr Johnson returned to the meeting at this point (3.03 pm)

The Chair and the Chief Fire Officer congratulated Mr Johnson on his appointment to the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The Chair concluded the meeting by wishing Members and Officers a Happy Christmas and New Year. He also thanked them for their work and support during 2016.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____