

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held on Wednesday, 20 June 2018, at 2.00 pm  
at Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

**Present**

**Members**

Councillors Adams, Carter (Chair), Dee, Hartin, Hosken, Mellings, Milner, Murray, Pardy, Philips, Pinter, Roberts (Vice-Chair), Sahota and Wynn

**Officers**

Rod Hammerton	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Andy Johnson	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	DCFO
Dave Myers	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	ACFO
Jonathan Eatough	Clerk and Monitoring Officer	Clerk
James Walton	Treasurer	Treasurer
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Ged Edwards	Planning, Performance and Communications Manager	PPCM
Germaine Worker	Head of HR and Administration	HHRA
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO

**External Bodies**

Tracey Onslow	West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner	DPCC
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**1 Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Hosken and seconded by Councillor Hartin

That Councillor Carter 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 Carter was duly elected Chair.

**2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Wynn and seconded by Councillor Hartin

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

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

### **Variation of Agenda**

**Resolved** that the order of the agenda be varied to allow item 20 – Election of Chairs and Appointment of Vice-Chairs to Committees to be considered at Agenda Item 9b – Committee Membership, Appointments and Constitution.

### **3 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Jones, Minnery and Price.

### **4 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Councillors Dee and Pardy declared an interest in item 12 as they are members of, or are in receipt of a pension from, the Firefighters Pension Schemes. They undertook to leave the meeting for item 12.

### **5 Public Questions**

Members suggested that the publicising of the public questions procedure should be reviewed in order to increase public engagement in meetings. The CFO undertook to look at this.

None

### **6 Non-Exempt Minutes**

**Resolved** that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 25 April 2018, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **7 Audit and Performance Management Committee Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 25 April 2018, be noted and that the recommendations at items 5 and 11, as given below, be agreed.

#### **Item 5 – Code of Corporate Governance 2017/18**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority formally adopt the Code of Corporate Governance 2017/18.

#### **Item 11 – Review of Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy, as recommended by the Audit and Performance Management Committee.

### **8 Standards and Human Resources Committee Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 15 May 2018, be noted.

## 9 Constitutional Issues

### 9a Committee Composition and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups

This report asked the Fire Authority to agree both the composition of its Committees and the allocation of seats on its committees to political groups.

The Clerk presented this report and advised that there was an error in the allocation of seats on the Standards and Human Resources (S&HR) Committee contained within the report. This should be as follows: Conservative – 4 seats; Labour – 2 seats and Liberal Democrat / Independent – 1 rather than Conservative – 3 seats; Labour – 2 seats and Liberal Democrat / Independent – 2 seats as stated in the report.

**Resolved unanimously** that the Fire Authority agree the Committee composition and allocation of seats to political groups, as set out in the Appendix to the report, with the seats on the Standards and Human Resources Committee being allocated as follows:

Conservative – 4 seats;  
Labour – 2 seats; and  
Liberal Democrat / Independent – 1 seat

### 9b Committee Membership and Constitution

This report asked the Fire Authority to confirm appointments to committees and to the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission and to review the constitution of its committees.

Councillor Hartin advised that in line with the allocation of seats on the S&HR Committee as agreed at item 9a, Councillor Mellings would be coming off that Committee with Councillor Dee remaining as the Liberal Democrat / Independent Member.

Councillor Carter also advised that the additional Conservative Member for S&HR Committee would be advised at a later date. The Clerk confirmed that he has delegated power to agree member appointments to Committees.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Agree the appointment of Members to serve on committees, as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- b) Appoint Councillor Carter as its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission;
- c) Appoint Councillor Sahota as the Equality and Diversity Member Champion;
- d) Appoint Councillor Sahota as the Risk Management and Audit Champion;
- e) Agree the proposed amendments to the constitution of its various committees, as set out in Appendix B to the report; and

- f) Agree the appointment of Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

### **9c Review of Member Role Descriptions**

This report asked Members to review and agree the Fire Authority's Member Role Descriptions.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority, having reviewed the Role Descriptions listed below, agree the minor changes proposed

- Member
- Chair of the Fire Authority
- Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority
- Leaders of Main Opposition Groups
- Equality and Diversity Champion
- Independent Person, including Skills and Competencies

### **9d Review of Scheme of Standing Orders**

This report reviewed the Fire Authority's Standing Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings and Business, Standing Orders relating to Contracts and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers and asked Members to consider and decide upon the amendments proposed.

**Resolved** that the amendments, as proposed in the report, be agreed to:

- Standing Orders for the Regulations of Proceedings and Business
- Standing Orders relating to Contracts
- The Scheme of Delegation to Officers

### **9e Meeting Schedule 2018**

The Meeting Schedule for Fire Authority and Committee meetings from June to December 2018 was brought to the Fire Authority for information. The Meeting Schedule for 2019 will be brought to the October 2018 Fire Authority meeting for agreement.

With regard to the Fire Authority meetings for the remainder of the year, Members requested an update on progress with the judicial review of the transfer of governance to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The CFO explained that the judicial review has been lodged and officers have been advised that there is a backlog in processing at present. As such the status quo remains with regard to governance of the Authority. The CFO further advised that the Authority will continue to work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to plan any transfer of governance. The Chair also advised that it was important for the Authority to continue to liaise going forward.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the draft Meeting Schedule for June to December 2018.

## 9f Review of Structure and Function of Fire and Rescue Authority and its Committees

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority have now been in place since 1997 and during that time has provided capable and committed governance and strategic direction to the Service in meeting its aim of “Putting Shropshire’s Safety First”.

However, it is believed that it would be appropriate at this time to undertake a full review of the form and function of the Authority, within the parameters of the Combination Scheme, to ensure it is performing its function in the best interests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness as described by the National Audit Office. This recommendation is in line with previous discussion and commitments and supports the Authority’s ambitions to remain relevant and sustainable.

Members are therefore asked to agree that the Standards and Human Resources Committee be tasked to undertake a review of the structure and composition of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, with specific regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and report back with recommendations to the Fire Authority, in line with the governance year.

The CFO advised that the recommendation had been worded to encourage the Authority to consider who would undertake the review. Members suggested that it would be better for the Strategy and Planning Working Group to consider this as they are considering other issues and it would be useful to ensure wider debate of the issue.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree that the Strategy and Planning Working Group be tasked to undertake a review of the structure and composition of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, with specific regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and report back with specific recommendations to the Fire Authority, in line with the governance year.

## 10 Statement of Accounts 2017/18

This report set out the key revenue issues, which had arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2017/18, and sought approval for use of the General Fund balance in 2018/19.

A revised version of the report was tabled to the meeting. A copy of this will be placed on the signed minute file.

The HoF talked through the revised report and assured Members that the Service is on course to meet the revised closedown timetable as set out in the report.

Members questioned the use of the word ‘slipped’ in relation to the General Fund balance as they felt it indicated something underhand. The HoF explained that the term means that the money is held and added or ‘slipped’ into the next year’s budget. The HoF undertook to use a different phrase in future.

The DPCC requested an explanation of how the figure of £70,000 for the legal challenge to the change of governance had been reached. The Clerk advised that as this had formed part of exempt item discussions at a previous meeting, it was inappropriate to discuss it in open session.

Members asked what the additional £47k of government grant related to. The HoF explained that the additional monies are from a number of small grants that the Government confirms after the Grant Settlement.

**Resolved unanimously** that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note the final position of the revenue budget and the General Fund balance in 2017/18; and
- b) Approve use of the General Fund balance in 2018/19.

## **11 Strategic Planning Process Timetable 2019/20**

This report outlined how the Service would continue to align service, financial and improvement planning, the result of which would culminate in the 2019/20 budget, publication of the 2019/20 Annual Plan and an update of the 2015-20 Action Plan, if required.

Members asked what would happen with regard to the Strategic Planning Timetable if governance of the Fire Authority should change. The PPCM explained that the timetable would have to be reviewed and changed as necessary.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report and agree the timetable set out in the appendix to the report.

Councillors Dee and Pardy left the meeting at this point (2.40 pm)

## **12 2017 Review of Local Government Pension Scheme, Employer Discretions Statement of Policy**

This report informed the Fire Authority of the review of the employer discretions Statement of Policy for the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the 2017 review of the Statement of Policy for the Local Government Pension Scheme; and
- b) Agree that the appended Statement of Policy remains unchanged.

Councillors Dee and Pardy returned to the meeting at this point (2.42 pm)

## **13 The Scheme for the Payment of Members Allowances 2018/19**

This report asked the Fire Authority to consider and agree its 2018/19 Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances.

Members raised concerns that Shropshire Council's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), who usually undertake reviews of the Fire Authority's allowance scheme, no longer exists following the resignation of its members. The Clerk advised that Telford & Wrekin Council also do not have a sitting IRP at present. Members tasked officers to liaise with officers at Shropshire Council regarding this issue.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree the recommendation relating to its Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances that members pay is uplifted by 4.04% over two years in line with their senior corporate responsibilities as identified within spinal column point 29 and above. In addition, the Fire Authority also tasked officers to undertake liaison with Shropshire Council with regard to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

## 14 Partnership Working

This report provided Members with an overview of the partnership working being undertaken by the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

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

## 15 Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2017/18

This report informed Members about the corporate risk management work that had been undertaken during the previous twelve months.

The PPCM presented this report and confirmed that there are currently 12 risks on the Authority's Risk Register. Of those 12 risks, 4 are new and 1 is the risk related to the potential change in governance which was re-opened during the reporting year.

Members queried why the risk rating for the risk related to electronic systems to support service delivery was higher than that for the risk related to the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP) when the ESMCP appeared to propose a greater risk for the Authority. The PPCM explained that the direction of travel for this risk had been increasing but it has now stabilised as the Service is looking to replace the Airwave contract by December. The CFO further advised that the Service is currently working on joint procurement with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the report.

## 16 Fire Alliance

On 15 March 2018, the Strategy and Resources Committee of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority provided direction to the Service to work with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service to develop a business case for an alliance between the two services. The purpose of the alliance would be to create greater capacity and resilience in a way that improved the sustainability of both organisations. The expectation at that time was that the business case would be available for consideration by both fire and rescue authorities in June 2018.

Significant work has been undertaken and the Services are agreed on a shared strategic purpose, 10 guiding principles and 5 areas of development that fit well with both Services but also offer opportunities for effective collaboration with other emergency services. However, whilst the work is moving forward well the Service requests additional time to make sure the plan is fully considered and well “socialised” with stakeholders, including the Strategy and Planning Working Group, prior to presentation to Fire Authority.

The CFO apologised to the Fire Authority for the Fire Alliance Plan not being available for consideration at this meeting and reassured the Authority that work is ongoing on the Plan. The draft Plan requires revision to ensure that it matches the scale and ambition of the Authorities. The request for additional time is to ensure that this work is done thoroughly and correctly.

Members acknowledged that the two authorities are obviously working together but sought assurance that this is not causing issues for either authority, or for any future developments with regard to governance. The CFO reassured the Authority that the Plan assists both authorities to dovetail together and will work regardless of who is in governance for either authority. The Chair commented that it is accepted that this Fire Authority needs closer liaison with Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority. This should happen irrespective of potential future governance changes

The DPCC asked what the 5 areas of development referred to in the agenda paragraph were. The CFO explained that these are functional areas and that the Alliance Plan would be shared with the Police and Crime Commissioner by the end of July.

The CFO further explained that the Plan does need to be fully socialised with stakeholders but it is not anticipated that this will cause any issues as there has been a commitment to the drafts of the Plan. Members acknowledged this and requested that a Member Briefing on the Fire Alliance be held before the October Fire Authority meeting.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree that additional time be given to ensure that the Plan is fully considered and well socialised with stakeholders, including the Strategy and Planning Working Group, prior to presentation to Fire Authority.

Councillor Murray left the meeting at this point (3.05 pm)

## 17 Exclusion of Press and Public

**Resolved** that, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting room 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 3, 4 and 5.

## 18 Exempt Minutes

Councillor Milner left the meeting at this point (3.07 pm)

## **18a 25 April 2018 (Paragraphs 3 and 5)**

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 25 April 2018, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **18b 9 May 2018 (Paragraph 5)**

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting, held on 9 May 2018, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **18c 23 May 2018 (Paragraph 5)**

Referring to the earlier query regarding the budget for the legal challenge, Members were mindful that similar questions by raised by the public and suggested that a robust statement be prepared explaining the reasons for the decision.

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting, held on 23 May 2018, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## **19 Exempt Appendix to Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2017/18 (Paragraph 4)**

Members received the exempt Appendix B to report 15 – Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2017/18.

**Resolved** that the exempt Appendix B to report 15 – Corporate Risk Management Summary Annual Report 2017/18 be noted.

## **20 Election of Chairs and Appointment of Vice-Chairs to Committees**

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

This item was considered at item 9b on the agenda with the following Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees being elected to hold office until the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting in June 2019.

#### **Strategy and Resources Committee**

Chair            Councillor Roberts  
Vice-Chair    Councillor Hartin

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

Chair            Councillor Sahota  
Vice-Chair    Councillor Mellings

#### **Standards and Human Resources Committee**

Chair            Councillor Adams  
Vice-Chair    Councillor Dee

## **Brigade Managers' Employment Panel**

Chair            Councillor Carter  
Vice-Chair    Councillor Roberts

## **Pensions Panel**

The Chair will be elected on an ad-hoc basis, as and when the Panel meets.

## **Strategy and Planning Working Group**

Chair            Councillor Carter  
Vice-Chair    Councillor Roberts

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm.

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....