

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
held on Wednesday, 13 October 2021, at 2.00 pm
in the Oak Room, Headquarters**

Present

Members

Councillors Burchett, Carter (Chair), Evans, Hartin, Hignett, Lea, Offland, Pardy, Price, Sahota and Thompson

Officers

Rod Hammerton	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Simon Hardiman	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Corporate Services)	ACFO(CS)
Dan Quinn	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)	ACFO(SD)
Anthea Lowe	Clerk and Monitoring Officer	Clerk
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Germaine Worker	Head of HR and Administration	HHRA
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO

Pensions Announcement

Following the paper that was brought to the Fire Authority in June 2021 in relation to managing Immediate Detriment cases, an agreement in principle was received from the Fire Authority to apply the guidance once legal advice had been confirmed.

On 8 October 2021, the Service received notification from the National Joint Council that a Memorandum of Understanding and framework had been agreed between the Local Government Association and the Fire Brigades Union. This is a really positive step as the Authority can now adopt the framework and deal with Immediate Detriment cases, ensuring individuals get what they are entitled to.

This is also a demonstration of how the NJC can work with both the employer and the Representative Bodies to overcome such issues with a working solution whilst a technical solution is awaited.

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Aldcroft, Minnery and Wynn.
Councillor Lavery did not attend the meeting.
James Walton, Treasurer

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Pardy declared an interest in item 9 on the agenda – Firefighters Pension Scheme Delegations – as he is a member of the Pension Scheme. Councillor Pardy undertook to leave the room for this item.

3 Public Questions

None

4 Fire Authority Minutes

Members requested that an amendment be made to item 10b of these minutes as the Chair of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee is Councillor Evans and not Councillor Sahota as stated. The ESO undertook to make this amendment.

Resolved that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority Annual Meeting, held on 23 June 2021, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee Minutes

5a 29 July 2021

Resolved that the Fire Authority receive and note the minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting, held on 29 July 2021.

5b 24 September 2021

Resolved that the minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting, held on 24 September 2021, be noted and that the recommendations at items 8 and 9, as given below, be agreed.

Item 8 – Appointment of External Auditors from 2023/24

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the Committee's recommendation that the sector led body approach to external auditor appointment be adopted.

Item 9 – Annual Review 2020/21

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the publication of the Annual Review 2019/20 as proposed by the Committee.

6 Strategy and Resources Committee Non-Exempt Minutes

Resolved that the non-exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 16 September 2021, be noted and that the recommendation at item 6, as given below, be agreed.

Item 6 – Financial Performance to July 2020

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve virements to the revenue budget, where requested;
- c) Note and approve changes to the capital programme; and
- d) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2021/22.

7 Constitutional Issues

7a Review of Standing Orders relating to Contracts

This report reviewed the Fire Authority's Standing Orders relating to Contracts and asked Members to consider and decide upon the amendments proposed.

The Clerk presented the report and explained that the review had been delayed due to the impacts of Brexit and that the proposed amendments are as set out in the report.

Members queried the when the outcomes of the consultation related to the review of the current public procurement regime, which ended on 10 March 2021, would be received. The Clerk confirmed that the outcomes of this review are still awaited.

Resolved that the Fire Authority agree the amendments to the Standing Orders relating to Contracts, as set out in the Appendix to the report.

7b Model Code of Conduct

This report sought approval of the draft Code of Conduct as attached at the Appendix to the report for adoption with immediate effect.

The Clerk presented this report and advised that adoption of the draft Code will give consistency across the constituent authorities.

Resolved that the Fire Authority approve the Code of Conduct, as attached at the Appendix to the report, be adopted with immediate effect.

The Executive Officers left the meeting at this point (2.18 pm)

8 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 light of the review.

The HHRA presented this report and highlighted the amendments that had been made to the process.

Members asked which were the new pay research organisations that are referred to in the report. The HHRA explained that West Midlands Employers are the new organisation. The Clerk also advised that comparator authorities need to be used for the pay review and the list of possible organisations is based on this.

Members asked who convenes the pay review and how long the review period is. The HHRA explained that the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel convenes the review and that it is considered prudent that it is completed as soon as is practicable.

Resolved that the Fire Authority:

- a) Note and agree the changes to the Brigade Managers Pay Panel Process; and
- b) Task the Brigade Managers' Employment Panel with meeting to commission a pay review.

The Executive Officers returned to the meeting at this point (2.25 pm) and Councillor Pardy left the meeting.

9 Firefighters' Pension Scheme Delegations

This report resulted from a routine review of the discretionary powers of the Fire Authority under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the review of the delegation of powers under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (as set out in the Appendix to the report) of which items 1 – 52 remain unchanged.

Councillor Pardy returned to the meeting at this point (2.28 pm)

10 Fire Alliance Board Update

This report updated Members on progress on the programme of priority projects developed by the Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester (HWFRS) and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS).

The CFO presented this report and advised that it is a 'strategic' Alliance Board which has matured and moved to a new phase. The four initial projects are now embedded and are yielding new projects that are leading to an increasingly operational and/or tactical alliance.

The following updates were then given on the Alliance workstreams:

Communications Strategy

This provides an internal focus for staff and encourages them to always ask if projects could or should be done with HWFRS.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

HWFRS have begun work on the process to align their Response standards with Shropshire.

Procurement

A review of all procurement opportunities has been carried out with a focus on areas where further collaborative benefits can be achieved. This has led to various priority areas being identified and these are as set out on page 3 of the report. Joint procurement does not mean that SFRs will always buy with HWFRS, for example with officer response vehicle provision, SFRS have made the choice to go with the Police procurement framework. Procurement decisions may also be driven by the phasing and / or timing of contracts.

ICT

- **Wide Area Network (WAN)**
Both Services have put separate solutions in place for the WAN as it was realised that there are benefits to having separate systems, namely cheaper costs and greater resilience.
- **Helpdesk**
A joint solution has been implemented for the ICT Helpdesk as this provides greater support and/or resilience for both Services.
- **Future Mobilising**
This Service has a more pressing need to progress with this workstream and so has pushed forward with it. HWFRS will follow at a suitable time for them.
- **Command and Control System**
All identified options have challenges so there is no benefit to choosing a system at present, but investigations will be undertaken to identify a command and control system replacement that can cover both areas but also allows independent use by each Service. It is estimated that completion of this project will take 2 to 3 years, after which this will become the operating model.

Environmental Management

Both Services are looking to reduce their carbon footprint and will bring together policy and methodology with the aim of achieving these reductions.

The CFO concluded by stating the Fire Alliance has moved past the initial phase and is now becoming a very useable Alliance.

The Chair commented that the report provided proof that the Alliance is worth doing. He also informed the Fire Authority that HWFRS have a new CFO and a new Fire Authority Chair, who is also now the Chair of the Alliance Board and are working on the same footing of achieving efficiencies, strength and resilience across both Fire Services.

Members asked for further detail on the Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP) Scheme. The CFO explained that it is a similar issue to Incident Command Units (ICUs) where historically, SFRS had two ICUs and HWFRS had three, but have now moved to three ICUs between both Services. Project appraisals will be undertaken to see if the same can be a similarly resilient model can be achieved for ALP provision across the two Services. It may be that smaller appliances can be purchased but there will be no reduction in appliance capability. It is not foreseen that this Service will lose ALP capability completely as this is need for larger fires / other incidents. The ACFO (CS) clarified that the aim of the project is to identify the most suitable tool for job which may also have potential savings.

Members raised concerns due to high-rise buildings in Telford. The CFO advised that this falls within the ALP review and will form part of the risk assessments for any proposed solution.

Resolved that the Fire Authority note the report.

11 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 Paragraph 3.

12 Strategy and Resources Committee Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 3)

Resolved that the Fire Authority receive and note the exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 16 September 2021.

13 Alerters and Station End Equipment Scheme (Paragraph 3)

This report set out the requirement for the Service to replace current alerting and station end equipment and associated costs, for on-call locations and staff. This will ensure mobilising systems continue to operate effectively into the future.

Resolved that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the report; and
- b) Approve funding to enable implementation of new mobilising equipment for On Call stations and staff.

The meeting closed at 3.00 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....