

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held in the Oak Room, Headquarters  
on Wednesday, 14 June 2023, at 2.00 pm**

**Present****Members**

Councillors Aldcroft, Burchett, Cook, Evans, Hartin, Hignett, Lea, Minnery (Chair), Offland, Overton (Vice-Chair), Pardy, Price, Thompson, and Wynn

**Officers**

Simon Hardiman	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Guy Williams	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support)	ACFO (SS)
Dan Quinn	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)	ACFO (SD)
Anthea Lowe	Clerk and Clerk to the Fire Authority	Clerk
James Walton	Treasurer	Treasurer
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Ged Edwards	Planning and Performance Manager	PPM
Jan Morris	Head of Transformation and Collaboration	HoTC
Germaine Worker	Head of Human Resources and Administration	HHRA
Luke Grant	Station Manager Transformation & Collaboration	SMTC
Mark Bayliss	Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner	DPCC
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO
Alison Matthews	Executive Support Supervisor	ESS

**1 Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Wynn

That Councillor Minnery 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 Minnery was duly appointed as Chair

**2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Offland and seconded by Councillor Hartin

That Councillor Overton 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 Overton was duly appointed as Chair

### **3 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Blundell

### **4 Vote of Thanks and Welcome**

The CFO formally recognised Councillor Jhawar and Councillor Carter contribution to the Fire Authority. The CFO proposed to invite them both back to the next Fire Authority meeting to formally thank them for their contribution.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Blundell and Councillor Cook from Telford & Wrekin Council to the Fire Authority.

### **5 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Councillor Pardy declared an interest in item 17 - Firefighters' Pension Scheme Delegations as he is in receipt of a firefighter pension. It was agreed that Councillor Pardy would leave the meeting room for this item.

### **6 Public Questions**

None

### **7 Non-Exempt Fire Authority Minutes**

**Resolved** that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 15 February 2023, be agreed, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **8 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes**

This item was deferred to the October 2023 meeting of the Fire Authority.

### **9 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee Minutes**

This item was deferred to the October 2023 meeting of the Fire Authority.

### **10 Constitutional Issues**

#### **10a 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 allocations of seats on its Committees to political groups as proposed in the Appendix of the report.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority agree its Committee Composition and the allocation of seats to political groups as proposed in the Appendix to the report.

## **10b Committee Membership and Appointments**

This report asked the Fire Authority to confirm appointments to its committees; to agree the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs to serve on committees; to appoint its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Service Commission; and to appoint its Member Champions.

The Clerk asked Members to delegate the appointments to Committees to the Clerk. These would then be resolved in writing within the next seven days. The Chair agreed the appointments could be made today as each political group had agreed their members.

The following Members were appointed to the Strategy and Resources Committee:

### **Strategy and Resources**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Roy Aldcroft	Gemma Offland	Nigel Hartin
John Price	Graham Cook	David Minnery
Paul Wynn		

**Resolved** that Councillor Offland be elected Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee

**Resolved** that Councillor Hartin be elected Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

### **Standards, Audit and Performance**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Garry Burchett	Richard Overton	Roger Evans
Chrisian Lea	John Thompson	Karen Blundell
Nick Hignett	Kevin Pardy	

**Resolved** that Councillor Pardy be elected Chair of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee.

Councillor Burchett raised the point that according to the Committee Terms of Reference, the largest political group on the Authority should chair the Standards, Audit and Performance committee. The Clerk advised that the interpretation is for the normal majority, but it is not clear. It should be agreed that it goes to the largest opposition group.

The Clerk advised the Chair that the wording is open to interpretation, whilst the suggested nomination goes against the spirit of the wording, there is no requirement as to which Group the Chair of the Committee should be from.

Members noted that there has been a similar situation with previous Chairs of that Committee, which is why the wording was introduced into the Terms of Reference. Members queried why this had been put into the rules if it was not going to be strictly complied with. The Chair advised this situation had not been envisaged as it had not applied for the previous two years, but he did agree that it should have been recognised before the meeting. The Chair stated that the paper should be reviewed thoroughly for future meetings.

The Clerk then confirmed the vote that had been taken earlier.

**Resolved** that Councillor Pardy be elected Chair of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee and that Councillor Burchett be elected Vice-Chair of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee

### **Brigade Managers Employment Panel**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Paul Wynn	Richard Overton	David Minnery
Garry Burchett	Gemma Offland	Roger Evans
Roy Aldcroft		

**Resolved** that Councillor Evans be elected Chair of the Brigade Managers Employment Panel.

**Resolved** that Councillor Wynn be elected Vice-Chair of the Brigade Managers Employment Panel.

### **Pensions Panel**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Paul Wynn	Richard Overton	Karen Blundell

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

### **Strategic Advisory Group**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Paul Wynn	Kevin Pardy	David Minnery
Garry Burchett	Graham Cook	Nigel Hartin
Roy Aldcroft	John Thompson	

**Resolved** that Councillor Burchett be elected Chair of the Strategic Advisory Group.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Agree the appointment of Members to serve on committees as agreed in the meeting;
- b) Agree the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs to serve on committees as agreed in the meeting;
- c) Confirm the delegation to the Clerk as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report;
- d) Appoint Councillor Minnery as its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission with Vice Chair Richard Overton to substitute when required
- e) Appoint Councillor Pardy as its Equality and Diversity Member Champion; and
- f) Appoint Councillor Evans as its Risk Management and Audit Member Champion.

### **10c Fire Authority Terms of Reference and Committee Constitutions**

This report requested approval of the Terms of Reference for the Fire Authority and also asked the Fire Authority to agree the constitutions of its committees.

The Fire Authority agreed increase of seats from 7 to 8 on the Strategic Advisory Group (StAG) to ensure that the membership of this group meets the criteria set out in the StAG Terms of reference which reflects the decision made at the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting in June 2022.

The Chair requested a review of the Terms of Reference and Committee Constitutions at the first available meeting of the Fire Authority.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the report;
- b) Agree the Terms of Reference for the Fire Authority, as set out in Appendix A to the report; and
- c) Agree the constitutions of its Committees, as set out in Appendix B to the report.

### **10d Review of Member Role Descriptions**

This report asked the Fire Authority to review and agree its Member Role Descriptions.

A revised member allowance table was emailed to all members on 9 June 2023 to correct the allowances shown in Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F and to reflect the ratification made by the Fire Authority in December 2022.

Members requested that the Role Descriptions for Standards, Audit and Performance Committee and Strategy and Resources Committee be reviewed. The HHRA advised the role descriptions were reviewed in March and/or April 2023. The Chair confirmed the role descriptions can be reviewed within the Committee, as the Terms of Reference are.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority have reviewed the Role Descriptions detailed below and note the amended member allowances as detailed in the email dated 9 June 2023:

- Member
- Chair of the Fire Authority
- Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority
- Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups
- Chair of Strategic Advisory Group
- Equality and Diversity Member Champion

## **10e Review of Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation to Officers**

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 note that there are no proposed amendments.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority considered and noted the report on

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

## **11 Financial Performance to March 2023**

This report provided information on the financial performance of the Service, and sought approval for action, where necessary.

The HoF presented this report and highlighted the following

- The budget for pay that was set by the Authority in February 2022 has been adjusted as variances have been reported to members during the year. These adjustments include the pay awards negotiated for both operational and support staff, which have cost around £450,000 more than the Authority's pay contingency.
- The non-pay element of the expenditure includes variances that have previously been reported to the Authority and the balance of the pay and prices contingency .
- Underspends have been identified on the On Call Duty System; these are set out in the table on page 3 of the report and are attributable to reduced staff and activity levels throughout the year.

- As shown on page 4 of the report, there has been an underspend on debt charges as no capital borrowing has yet been undertaken for capital projects. It is proposed that this is transferred to the Major Projects Reserve to reduce future borrowing against the capital programme.
- A contribution into the Pensions Account was required for ill health retirements
- It is proposed that, unless specified, variances will be transferred to individual contingencies where they will be managed with future variances.
- The capital programme for 2024/25 contains two schemes for replacement vehicles. The Fleet and Workshops Manager has requested that these are brought forward to 2023/24, to enable the vehicles to be ordered.
- As shown on page 6 of the report, the Fire Authority currently has £10.8m of funds invested with organisations that are on the Authority's current acceptable counterparties list for investment.

**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 amendments to the capital programme; and
- d) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2022/23.

## **12 Statement of Accounts 2022/23**

This report set out the key revenue issues which have arisen from work on the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 and sought approval for use of the General Fund balance in 2023/24.

The HoF presented this report and advised that the final audited accounts must be published by 30 September 2023.

As shown on page 2 of the report, the graph shows how the revenue budget for 2022/23 was funded. Additional grants were provided by Government to compensate for business rates reductions. These are shown in the graph within 'Other Grants'. During 2022/23 the Fire Authority received regular updates on financial performance and approved changes of £572,000 to the revenue budget. Actual out turn on the revenue budget was £23,259 and further variances of £579,000 were identified.

In 2021/22, the Authority transferred the majority of the General Fund Balance to the Service Transformation Fund Staff Reserve; this was to provide capacity and expertise for the suite of strategic projects being undertaken by the Service. A further contribution is recommended to continue the projects which have been prioritised, that is the On-Call Sustainability Review, the Command and Control System and the Resources Review, and to fund fixed term projects in other areas of the Service where additional capacity may be required.

The General Fund balance at the end of 2022/23 is £1.723m; £265k of this will be slipped to 2023/24, leaving a balance of £1.458m available for distribution to reserves. Work has continued on the major refurbishment of the training centre and fire station at Telford. Significant technical issues have been identified with the existing structure which will result in additional time being taken and cost incurred, with a likely final cost of £15m.

The HoF informed the meeting that it is proposed that the balance on the General Fund is transferred to the Major Projects Reserves to release further efficiencies in funding the Capital Programme.

The HoF advised the members there had been an amended to the table on page 4. Please see changes below

	<b>£'000</b>
Major Projects Reserve	883
STP Staff Reserve	275
Training Reserve	150 (Unchanged)
Equipment Replacement Reserve	150 (Unchanged)
Total	1,458

The Chair thanked the HoF and the Finance Team for the reports and commented that the Fire Authority is in a good position financially.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the final position of the revenue budget and the General Fund balance in 2022/23; and
- b) Approve use of the General Fund balance in 2023/24, subject to the amendments outlined above.

### **13 Strategic Planning Process Timetable 2024/25**

This report outlined how the Service will continue to align service, financial and improvement planning, the result of which will culminate in the 2024/25 budget and the publication of the 2024/25 Annual Plan.

The Authority queried how it will be ensured that Members are able to feedback into the process during the year. The PPM advised that Members will receive regular updates at Committees. Members will also be included on planned station visits with Officers.

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



## 14 HMICFRS Values and Culture Update

This report presents the Service progress against the recommendations made to the sector in the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Values and Culture in the fire and rescue services report

Members asked if the nine recommendations in item 5, bullet point 2 have been completed. The SMTC confirmed that they had been completed.

Members also sought reassurance on how the Service is managing the capacity impacts on existing workloads. The CFO advised that the recommendations do create a work burden which the Service is seeking to deliver with existing capacity and using portfolio management. 20 of the 35 recommendations are within the Service's gift to address with, the remaining 15 are dependent on input from other organisations before they can be completed. The Service is moving through the recommendations at pace and is currently in the process of commissioning an independent review of Cultures and Values within the organisation.

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

## 15 Annual Report on Collaborative and Partnership Working

This report provided an overview and audit of collaborative and partnership working being undertaken by the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service). It also includes an update on contracts and the link to business continuity.

The HoTC presented this report and gave a summary of the partnership and collaborative working highlighted for Prevention and Protection, Operational Response and Equality and Diversity.

Whilst Members are supportive of partnership working, they did express concern that the benefits appear to be only. If the Police are reducing the number of their police stations and using Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service facilities, they are benefiting from the savings. The ACFO (SS) advised that fire stations are mainly being used by Police officers to provide a local base if there is an incident, rather than as permanent police stations. The DPCC advised that West Mercia Police are open to working in partnership and cited the example of Redditch where a joint police and fire station is being built.

The CFO informed the Fire Authority that he had recently met with the Chief Executive of the PCC's Office. It was a productive meeting with early discussions on how joint working might develop in Shropshire and the sharing of both organisations' estate strategies.

Members noted the RNLi work referred to in item 5 and asked for further detail about the level of training and how many sessions have been delivered.

The ACFO (SD) advised that he did not have precise data to hand, but he was aware that the Service's Prevention Team has been working tirelessly with local businesses around the River Severn to promote the training.

The ACFO (SS) informed the Authority that the Service educates approximately 3000 children every year through the Crucial Crew initiative. This plays a key part in targeting education around water risk. It was agreed that Members would be invited to attend upcoming Crucial Crew events.

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

## **16 Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2022/23**

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

There are currently fourteen risks on the Corporate Risk Register, which includes four new risks that were added during this reporting year.

The Appendix to the report details the current Risk Register and gives a Direction of Travel (DoT) for each of the 12 risks with two further risks being detailed in the exempt Appendix B to the report (Item 20 on this agenda). The DoTs for each of the 12 risks detailed has either been maintained or has reduced with none increasing.

The Chair stated that it is pleasing to note that the DoT for two of the risks had reduced.

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

Councillor Pardy left the meeting at this point (3.20 pm)

## **17 Firefighters' Pension Scheme Delegations**

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

The HHRA presented this report and advised that the amendments proposed in the appendices relate to two areas.

Firstly, a column has been added in each table so that they now include a column E. This covers those decisions / actions that are delegated to the Pension Administrator in conjunction with the Fire Authority. Some of the delegations are now carried out automatically by the Pension Administrator, West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) under business as usual. However, there are a number of other discretions where WYPF will review the matters on case-by-case basis and then send all of the details to the Fire Authority as normal for a decision.

Secondly, the delegations marked “To be archived post remedy” relate to active members of the final salary schemes. As there are no active members of the Final Schemes from 1 April 2022, they will no longer be needed after the McCloud Sargent remedy has been finalised.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the review of the Delegation of powers under the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 2015, 1992 Scheme and 2006 Scheme (as set out in Appendix A,B,C to this report)
- b) Consider and approve, or otherwise accept the proposed changes to these Schemes.

Councillor Parady re-joined the meeting at this point (3.25 pm)

## **18 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**Resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

## **19 Brigade Managers Employment Panel Minutes (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3)**

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Brigade Managers Employment Panel meeting, held on 01 September 2022, be noted.

## **20 Exempt Appendix to Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2022/23 (Paragraphs 3 and 4)**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority receive and note the exempt Appendix B to the report 16 – Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2022/23.

The Chair advised members it his intention to raise the profile of the Authority within Shropshire. He is planning to visit On Call stations. The Chair will notify members when visiting stations in their area and they will be welcome to join the visit.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....