

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held in the  
AFC Telford United, New Bucks Head Stadium,  
Watling Street, Wellington, TF1 2TU  
on Wednesday, 19 June 2024, at 2.00 pm**

**Present  
Members**

Councillors Aldcroft, Blundell, Carter, Cook, Evans, Hartin, Hignett, Lea, Minnery, Offland, Price and Wynn

**Officers**

Guy Williams	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support)	ACFO (SS)
Sam Burton	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)	ACFO (SD)
Richard Phillips	Clerk and Monitoring Officer	Clerk
James Walton	Treasurer	Treasurer
Andrew Kelcey	Head of Resources	HoR
John Campion	Police and Crime Commissioner	PCC
Jan Jennings	Communications Consultant	JJ
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Supervisor	ESS
Aleksandra Zydek	Executive Support Officer	ESO

## **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

Councillor Minnery took the Chair and welcomed press representatives, introduced ACFO Sam Burton and PCC John Campion to the meeting.

## **2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Minnery and seconded by Councillor Offland 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 Vice-Chair.

### **3 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Burchett, Pardy and Overton, Simon Hardiman (CFO), Adam Matthews (ACFO SS), Germaine Worker (HHRA), Joanne Codey (HoF), Scott Hurford (HoTC), Ged Edwards (PPM) and Mark Millward (HoAC).

### **4 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None

### **5 Public Questions**

None

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

**Resolved**, with abstention from Councillors Blundell and Hignett, that the non-exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 21 February 2024, be agreed, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **7 Strategy and Resources Committee Minutes**

**Resolved**, with abstention from Councillor Offland, that the Fire Authority notes the non-exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resource Committee meeting, held on 20 March 2024.

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

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority notes the non-exempt minutes of the Standard, Audit and Performance Committee meeting, held on 23 May 2024

#### **8a Draft Code of Corporate Governance 2023/24**

**Resolved** that Fire Authority formally adopt Code of Corporate Governance 2023/24, as attached in appendix.

#### **8b Review of Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy**

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority re-affirm the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy, attached as in appendix.

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

Members requested that the proposed Committee Compositions and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups was read out loud.

The Clerk read out the following:

**Total number of Members each political group should have on Fire Authority as a whole:**

Shropshire Council: 6 Conservative, 1 Labour and 3 Liberal Democrats/ Independent for total number of 10 seats.

Telford and Wrekin Council: 4 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat/ Independent for total number of 5 seats.

This results in Fire Authority to consist of 15 members: 6 Conservative, 5 Labour and 4 Liberal Democrat/ Independent.

**Strategy and Resources Committee**

3 Conservative          2 Labour          2 Liberal Democrat / Independent

7 members in total.

**Standards, Audit and Performance Committee**

3 Conservative          3 Labour          2 Liberal Democrat / Independent

8 members in total.

**Brigade Managers Employment Panel**

3 Conservative          2 Labour          2 Liberal Democrat / Independent

7 members in total

**Pensions Panel**

1 Conservative          1 Labour          1 Liberal Democrat / Independent

3 members in total

**Strategic Advisory Group**

3 Conservative          3 Labour          2 Liberal Democrat / Independent

8 members in total.

**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.

At this point in the meeting a short adjournment was called a to allow Groups to confirm nominations to Committees and come back to inform the Fire Authority.

## **9b 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 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	Graham Cook	Nigel Hartin
John Price	Gemma Offland	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	Lee Carter	Karen Blundell
Nick Hignett	Richard Overton	Roger Evans
Christian Lea	Kevin Pardy	

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

**Resolved** that Councillor Hignett 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>
Roy Aldcroft	Gemma Offland	Nigel Hartin
Garry Burchett	Richard Overton	David Minnery
Paul Wynn		

**Resolved** that Councillor Hartin 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>
Roy Aldcroft	Graham Cook	Nigel Hartin
Gary Burchett	Kevin Pardy	David Minnery
Paul Wynn	TBC	

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

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

### **People Panel**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Paul Wynn	Richard Overton	Roger Evans
Substitute Nick Hignett	Substitute Lee Carter	Substitute Karen Blundell

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

### **Appeals Panel**

<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat / Independent</b>
Roy Aldcroft	Gemma Offland	David Minnery
<i>Substitute</i> Christian Lea	<i>Substitute</i> Kevin Pardy	<i>Substitute</i> Nigel Hartin

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

In considering the report Members proposed that Terms of Reference and Role Descriptions be reviewed and delegations to Clerk and appointment of Fire Authority Representatives be deferred until this review takes place.

**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.

It was proposed by the Members that the following items are deferred to the future Fire Authority meeting as they are pending a review:

- c) Confirm the delegation to the Clerk as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report.
- d) Appoint its representative on the Local Government Association Fire Services Commission with Vice Chair to substitute when required.
- e) Appoint its Equality and Diversity Member Champion; and
- f) Appoint its Risk Management and Audit Member Champion.

### **9c Fire Authority Terms of Reference and Committee Constitutions**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

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

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

### **9e Review of Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation to Officers**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

### **9f Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference For information**

This report, presented by ACFO SD, seeks feedback from the Fire Authority in relation to the development of a Scrutiny Committee and the attached Terms of Reference.

The ACFO SD stated that in line with expectation set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018, Sections 3.12 and 3.13, the Fire Authority will establish a Scrutiny Committee to support in achieving its strategic objectives and ensuring that its policy and budgetary framework is followed and developed to reflect the changing needs and demands in meeting its statutory obligations. She added that the overall purpose of the Committee will be to provide oversight and assurance that Chief Fire Officer and Senior Management Team are making appropriate and effective decisions.

The ACFO informed the Fire Authority that she will be looking for feedback from the Members on the proposed Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee outside of current meeting with approval planned for October Fire Authority meeting.

Members questioned which committee should be involved in this process or if this report could be added to review panel which will be reviewing Terms of Reference of Fire Authority and Committees.

The PCC noted that considerations have to be made on how the scrutiny happens and that it is not just based on the information supplied by the Officers but involves further analysis and review. The PCC highlighted that it is worth looking at good practice from other organisations and that the PCC has a scrutiny resource that could help. He commented on importance of involving local authorities in the process.

The Members added they will consider the PCC comments when considering this report.

**Resolved** that Fire Authority:

- a) approve the creation of a Scrutiny Committee
- b) provide feedback on the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee, attached as an appendix to this report.

## **9g Disciplinary Procedures for Relevant Officers**

### **For decision**

This report, presented by the Clerk, asks the Fire Authority to agree disciplinary procedures for relevant officers. He explained that for the purpose of this report, senior Executive Officers refers to those at the level of Deputy Chief Fire Officer and above.

The Clerk noted that although the disciplinary process for Chief Fire Officers is set out in the National joint council (NJC) Terms and Conditions for Chief Executives, there is no similar process for DCFOs. Therefore, it is proposed to include DCFO in process for Executive Officers which would make a provision for disciplinary matters to be dealt by Personnel Panel being drawn from the membership of the Fire Authority.

The Clerk added that any officer short of dismissal have right to appeal. Therefore, Members are also asked to appoint the Members to the politically balanced Appeal Panel and Independent Review Panel.

Whilst acknowledging this will delay things, the members raised that as the paper was only received yesterday, they did not have sufficient time to consider and review it and therefore they cannot make a decision on this matter. Members proposed this paper is deferred and Extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority is arranged following appropriate procedures. Members recognised the seriousness of the matter at hand.

The PCC expressed his surprise that this process did not exist already and stressed the importance of addressing this matter urgently to reinforce the Service/ Authority reputation. He noted that he would like to better understand how Independent Panel members are selected to further the safeguarding rationale and clarify what Fire Authority means by 'Independent'.

The Clerk explained that the Section 28 of the Localism Act requires the authority to appoint at least one independent person whose views must be sought after it has made an investigation and before it takes a decision. He added that the Authority has already appointed 2 independent persons already.

Members recognised the need to appoint 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent person and urgency to make informed decision.

Members questioned if they decided to make a decision today if it would have any legal implications considering the paper was only released yesterday.

The Clerk informed Members that papers should be received at least 5 working days prior to the meeting, or such time papers are reasonably available so If the members decided to make a decision today it would be legal.

Members stated that the short notice did not allow for adequate review considering the weight of information they need to decide on. Members expressed that they are not prepared to make a decision on this matter today.

This item was deferred, and it was proposed Extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority is called in following weeks. The ESS will talk to group leaders to choose appropriate date.

Members were concerned to note that Chair was not sighted on the revised agenda and Members were not provided with reports marked to follow in appropriate time. Members requested reports need to be issued enough time before the meetings for Members to be able to review the reports.

## **10 Financial Performance to March 2024**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

## **11 Statement of Accounts 2023/24**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

## **12 Strategic Planning Process Timetable 2025/26**

This report, presented by ACFO SS, outlined how the Service will continue to align service, financial and improvement planning, the result of which will culminate in the 2025/26 budget and the publication of the 2025/26 Annual Plan.



The ACFO SS brought Members attention to key dates on page 2 of the appendix to the report. He highlighted CRMP 2024-25 was moved to December Fire Authority Meeting to allow for additional capacity during summer for HMIFRS Inspection currently underway.

Members were concern that with elections taking place in Shropshire in May 2025 the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting in April 2025 will clash with period of purdah and requested this meeting to be moved to before March 2025.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the contents of the report and the agree the timetable set out in the Appendix to the report with amendment that the April 2025 Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting to be moved prior to March 2025.

### 13 Annual Report on Collaborative and Partnership Working

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

The ACFO SS gave a summary of the partnership and collaborative working highlighted the following:

- Fire Alliance Collaboration and ongoing Command and Control system project. He added that this collaboration provides two relatively small services with the strengths of a large organisation without losing their individual identities. Both the Service and HWFRS remain separate organisations which operate independently and have a full control of their own resources.
- Prevention and Protection Partnerships
  - Baywater Health Care who supplies the Service with weekly data regarding patients using oxygen therapy at home. Patients are offered safe and well visits.
  - RNLI waterside responder scheme which supports the delivery of throwline training by Service staff to various volunteers from waterside businesses.
  - Supreme Homecare where clients are referred to the Service for Safe and Well visits and the Service also provides training to staff to identify hazards
- Operational Response Partnerships and Other Collaborations
  - Southern Police Vehicle Framework that assures procurement compliance and efficiency of car and light van purchase.
  - Police Property Sharing that seeks to support rationalisation of the total public sector estate. The police currently use accommodation at Much Wenlock and Newport Fire Stations and have access to other sites as needed.

- Equality and Diversity Groups and Partnerships works on with the range of groups. The ACFO SS highlighted Women in the Fire Service and the Voices group created in 2020 which was recognised by HMIFRS as innovative practice.

The ACFO SS pointed out that significant work was carried out over the last 12 months to ensure Register is up to date and values of our partners match values of the Service/ Authority.

Members questioned if Vehicle Framework and Police Property Sharing is purely operational or if those items should come before the Fire Authority first.

The ACFO SS explained that One Public Estate framework looks at opportunities to better use existing buildings. The Police currently have staff who operate from the Service's stations and only a very bespoke elements or requests would need a wider conversation.

The Members praised work of the Prevention Team. Members commented that they find direct contact point valuable. Members requested that their thanks are passed to the team.

The Members questioned if there is a possibility for Women in the Fire Service to give presentation to the Fire Authority on the Service's performance and if there is opportunity for Fire Authority representative on regional EDI group to have more oversight on how the Service is dealing with issues.

The ACFO SS explained that the Voices groups provide feedback and Members can meet with Voices representatives outside of Fire Authority meetings.

Members highlighted importance of hearing all the voices. Meeting with Voices Group and EDI Steering group to be arranged outside of Fire Authority. Members stressed the importance of proactive approach from all Members of Fire Authority when it comes to interaction with the Voices representatives. Members requested that EDI Champion will be addressed as part of review of meeting.

The PCC commented that inclusion in 2024 should not only be about giving platform but also the Service displaying allyship. He added that Members should champion being allies rather than relying on those from underrepresented groups to raise issues.

The PCC also commented on Police sharing the Service property and exploring further opportunities for sharing more spaces going forward.

The PPC acknowledged the need for joint prevention work around road traffic collisions. He recognised that collisions on county roads are significant consumer of The Service responses. He would be keen to have a further conversation around preventative work for motorcyclists, who are

disproportionately killed on county roads. The PCC notes the Service campaigns success on reducing number of fires. He commented that campaigning together would increase chances of seeing reduction in current road traffic collisions spike and help change current statistics.

Members recognised that West Mercia was one of 8 regions selected to pilot Local Resilience Forum scheme which allows to combine resources in the area without losing operational independence.

The ACFO SS highlighted current work on strengthening relationship between Area Command and Protection & Prevention Teams. Head of Area Command is leading this work. He commented that data on Road Traffic Collisions on county A roads is really concerning.

Members commented that they are pleased to know The Service is making progress on Prevention and Protection work.

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

## **14 Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24**

This report, presented by ACFO SS, informed Members of the corporate risk management work that has been undertaken during the previous twelve months.

The ACFO SS explained that ongoing monitoring of the Service's corporate risk management is a responsibility of the Performance and Risk Group (PRG) and Risk Management Group (RMG) and in turn the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee (SAP) receive regular corporate risk management reports. He highlighted that there are currently 17 risks on the Corporate Risk Register, which includes 7 new risks added during this reporting year.

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

## **15 Operational Update**

This item was deferred to the October 2024 meeting of the Fire Authority.

The Chair thanked PCC John Campion for his attendance. At this point in the meeting the PCC and members of the press were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business.

## **16 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.

**17 Exempt Fire Authority Minutes (Paragraphs 1,2,3 And 5)**

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Fire Authority meeting, held on 21 February 2024, be agreed, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**18 Exempt Standards, Audit and Performance Committee minutes (Paragraph 4)**

**Resolved** that the exempt minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee meeting, held on 23 May 2024, be noted.

**19 Exempt Appendix to Corporate Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24 (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 2023/24.

At this point the Officers, except Clerk, JJ and ESS were excluded from the meeting for the three following items of business.

**20 Exempt Fire Authority Minutes (Paragraphs 1,2,3 and 5)**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

**21 Exempt Fire Authority Minutes (Paragraphs 1,2,3 and 5)**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

**22. Update on Leadership Arrangements (Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5)**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....