

**Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority  
held in the Oak Room, Headquarters  
on Thursday, 17 April 2025, at 2.00 pm**

**Present**

**Members**

Councillors Blundell, Burchett, Evans, Handley, Hignett, Lea, Minnery (Chair), and Wynn

**Officers**

Simon Hardiman	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Sam Burton	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	DCFO
Karen Gowreesunker	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support)	ACFO (SS)
Richard Phillips	Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer	Clerk
Joanne Codey	Head of Finance	HoF
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Supervisor	ESS

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Cook, Davis, Hartin, Overton (Vice-Chair), Pardy and Price  
Councillor Aldcroft did not attend the meeting.  
James Walton, Treasurer  
Germine Worker, Head of HR and Administration

**2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None

**3 Public Questions**

None

**4 Member Governance Workshop Outcomes**

This report set out the work which has been undertaken, and also those further areas of where work will be undertaken before the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Fire Authority, in relation to the future governance arrangements of the Authority.

The Clerk presented the report and explained the following to Members:

- The Fire Authority is asked to approve the direction forward after the Governance Review and associated Workshops

- This includes establishing a Scrutiny Committee and appointing two independent members to sit on that Committee alongside five Fire Authority Members
- Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Committee will be brought to the Authority's AGM for agreement
- Member training provision will be reviewed and updated to reflect current requirements, including development of a dedicated induction session for new Members which will provide an understanding and oversight of the Authority including Officer roles
- Work will be undertaken to strengthen the Authority's relationship with the Representative Bodies
- The Scheme of Delegation to Officers will be revised to ensure that it covers in absence / right level of decision making. This will assist with Officer empowerment
- The Member / Officer Protocol will be amended to reflect the suggestions and feedback captured during the Governance Review
- An Officer / staff social media Policy is being developed. This will be widened to include reference to Members as using the same policy will aid governance

Members queried how the unions and representative bodies playing a constructive role in governance would be facilitated. The CFO explained that they will be invited to attend Authority and Committee meetings in an observational capacity as is currently the case but will sit at the meeting table rather than in the public gallery.

The political make-up of the Scrutiny Committee will need to be considered if the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority are going to sit on the Committee. All Committees will be politically balanced.

The Authority discussed making training and particularly induction compulsory for Members. There was debate about whether this could be made compulsory as there is no legal requirement for the training to be done or if it should be strongly recommended to the constituent authorities. It was felt that the responsibility for ensuring training is completed should ultimately sit with the Group Leaders at the constituent authorities.

**Resolved unanimously** that the Fire Authority

- a) Approve the creation of a dedicated Scrutiny Committee as detailed within the report, with suitable terms of reference to be approved at the Annual General Meeting prior to appointments to that Committee;
- b) Agree that a recruitment exercise to appoint two independent members to sit on the Scrutiny Committee be commenced as detailed within the report;
- c) Note that Officers are creating a new induction programme, ensuring both new Members, and returning Members, are provided with the skills and expertise they require to make strategic decisions on the Fire Authority;

- d) Approve revising the role profiles for all Members, building in the feedback provided during the recent Governance Workshops, for approval at the Annual General Meeting;
- e) Re-state the standing invite from the Fire Authority to recognised unions and their representative bodies to attend Fire Authority meetings, ensuring their ability to play a constructive role in the future governance of the Fire Authority and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service;
- f) Approve that discussions be undertaken by Officers with recognised unions and representative bodies to create an agreed framework for more constructive partnership working in the future;
- g) Note the creation of revised delegations to Officers be undertaken, ready for consideration and approval at the Annual General Meeting;
- h) Note that a revised Member/Officer Protocol will be drafted for consideration at the Annual General Meeting, reflecting the suggestions and feedback provided during the Governance Workshops; and
- i) Agree that the final draft of a social Media Protocol for Members and Officers be brought to the Annual General Meeting for approval.

## 5 Updated Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure

This paper updated the post and committee references within Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IRDP). The Procedure remains in line with the requirements of the Pension Act 1995, and subsequent amendments, and in accordance with the recommendations contained within Fire Service Pensions Circular 1/2009.

**Resolved** that the Fire Authority note the updated post and committee references at Stage 2, Internal Dispute Resolution.

### Chair's Notices

Shropshire Council has elections on 1 May 2025.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their support and participation and advised that he will also write personal thank yous to individuals.

The meeting closed at 2.20 pm.

**Chair**.....

**Date**.....