

**Minutes of the Meeting of  
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority  
Human Resources Committee  
held at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury  
at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 1 November 2005**

**Present:** Councillors Davies, Dr Drummond, Hartin, Mrs Holyoak, Lloyd and Picken

**1 Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Holyoak

That Councillor Lloyd be elected Chair of the Human Resources Committee to hold office until the meeting of the Human Resources Committee immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Lloyd was duly elected Chair.

**2 Appointment of Vice-Chair**

It was proposed by Councillor Lloyd and seconded by Councillor Hartin

That Councillor Picken be appointed Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee to hold office until the meeting of the Human Resources Committee immediately following the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Picken was duly elected Vice-Chair.

**3 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs Swift.

**4 Minutes**

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Dr Drummond and

**Resolved:** *that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting, held on 7 July 2005, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.*

**5 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at this point. Councillor Mrs Holyoak subsequently declared a personal interest in item 20 in that she knew one of the firefighters, who had made an application to undertake outside employment.



## 6 Health Panel Minutes

**Resolved:** *that the non-exempt minutes of the Health Panel meetings, held on 6 December 2004, 18 May 2005 and 13 September 2005 be noted.*

## 7 Brigade Chaplain

This report asked Members to consider the future role of a Brigade Chaplain and the appointment and funding of a new Chaplain to be engaged under Retained conditions of service, following the sad loss earlier in the year of Reverend Rod Biddle.

The Committee agreed that it was essential to the welfare of the whole service that there be someone available to provide pastoral care and support. In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Holyoak the Assistant Chief Officer replied that the support provided would be non-denominational and that, where required, the Chaplain would act as a point of contact for other denominations.

Members noted that the cost of engaging a Chaplain within the current financial year could be contained within the existing budget and that it would not increase significantly in future years. The total indicative costs for the first year, including travel expenses, would be approximately £4,271 (at development rate), moving to £4,372 during year two (at competent rate). Furthermore, the Chaplain would report to the Assistant Chief Officer, who would monitor attendances and travel expenses throughout the year.

It was proposed by Councillor Holyoak, seconded by Councillor Davies and

**Resolved:** *that the Committee recommend to the Fire Authority that it agree to the appointment and funding of a new Brigade Chaplain under Retained conditions of service.*

## 8 Member Training and Development

This report asked the Committee to consider, and comment upon, a training and development questionnaire to be circulated to all Members of the Fire Authority and Independent Members of its Standards Committee. It also asked the Committee to consider, and recommend to the Fire Authority, a process for Member personal development review.

The Committee and Administration Manager advised that, having circulated the questionnaire to Members and officers for comment, she had now received useful feedback. This suggested that the skills / knowledge required be grouped under generic headings, which tied in with the roles of Members on specific committees. Members agreed that this approach would be helpful. They also noted that, if they agreed to the first option (that the personal development review process be conducted by a senior officer of the Fire Authority) the Assistant Chief Officer would oversee the process.

A wide-ranging debate ensued regarding the various options proposed for the personal development review process. Whilst Members discounted the third option (that the reviews be conducted by the Leader of each political group), they were unable to agree, which of the other two options should be recommended to the Fire Authority.



The Committee was concerned about how much of the Assistant Chief Officer's time would be taken up in the process. Councillor Hartin felt that it might be necessary to raise difficult issues, which would be better dealt with by an external adviser. It was emphasised, however, that the review would not consider performance, as the Committee had previously agreed that the review would relate only to development needs.

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the review did need to be robust, as there could be areas of disagreement, but this should not be an issue, if dealt with in a professional manner. As far as time commitment was concerned, the reviews could be part of a rolling programme and other managers within the Brigade would provide support.

After further discussion regarding timescales for implementation, it was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Holyoak and

**Resolved:** *that the Committee agree*

- a) *The Member training and development questionnaire, subject to the amendments suggested above; and*

On a vote with four Members for and two abstentions

- b) *That the Fire Authority be recommended to adopt a personal development review process for Members to be conducted by a senior officer of the Brigade; and*
- c) *That officers bring a report to the next meeting of the Committee providing full details of the impact of this work on Brigade officers and the costs of engaging an external consultant to conduct the review process.*

## **9 Assessment and Development Centres**

This report provided an update on the regional progress in planning and implementing Assessment and Development Centres.

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*

## **10 Response to the Draft Learning and Development Strategy**

This report gave an update on the response provided to the draft national Learning and Development Strategy.

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*

## **11 Rank to Role**

This report provided an update on the latest situation with regard to the movement from a rank to a role-based structure.

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*



## **12 Consultation on New Arrangements for the Recruitment of Firefighters and the Progression of Operational and Control Managers in the Fire and Rescue Service**

Members considered Fire and Rescue Service Circular 42-2005, which invited participation in a consultation exercise on 'New Arrangements for the Recruitment of Firefighters and the Progression of Operational and Control Managers in the Fire and Rescue Service'.

The Committee noted that officers were in favour of the first option proposed in the consultation (that national processes be applied in all fire and rescue authorities for firefighter selection and assessment development centres). This option would be the most cost-effective, as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would be responsible for procuring the work required.

Councillor Hartin asked whether this was the best option for recruiting the highest calibre of firefighters. The Assistant Chief Officer responded that it was as far as wholtime recruits were concerned. The national process did not, however, provide the flexibility required when recruiting retained firefighters. The pool, from which the Fire Authority was able to recruit retained personnel, was already very limited and would become even smaller, if the pass mark were to be fixed. Officers intended to include this point in their response to the consultation.

**Resolved:** *that Fire and Rescue Service Circular 42-2005 be noted.*

## **13 Age Discrimination Consultation**

This report advised of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's response to the Government's consultation on draft regulations to outlaw age discrimination.

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*

## **14 Review of Firefighters' Pension Arrangements**

This report provided an update on the latest circular received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on firefighter pension arrangements.

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*

## **15 Association of British Insurers Advice to the Chief Fire Officers' Association on Terrorism Insurance**

Members were provided with information from the Association of British Insurers regarding Terrorism Insurance, which had been provided to the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA).

The Committee noted that the Fire Brigades Union had expressed concern at national level that the personal insurance policies of firefighters contained terrorism exclusions. In the event of death or injury resulting from terrorism insurers would, therefore, refuse to make payment. The Government had responded that the Fire and Rescue Service provided death and injury benefits for firefighters through their conditions of service and pension scheme and that these were better than those of



other emergency services. Under the circumstances it did not intend to introduce any changes in the current system.

Following this exchange CFOA had sought advice from the Association of British Insurers regarding terrorism exclusions. This made it clear that it was possible to obtain insurance from a number of companies, which did not operate such exclusions. The advice did, however, recommend that individuals check the wording of their policies carefully and address any questions to their insurer or broker.

Members were concerned that not all staff had been alerted that they should carry out such a check. The Assistant Chief Officer undertook to raise this issue with the Chief Fire Officer.

**Resolved:** *that the report be noted.*

## **16 Future Meetings**

Members were asked to confirm the date for the next meeting of the Human Resources Committee and to consider whether future meetings should be held at a later time or on a different day. It was noted that one of the Members of the Committee was unable to attend any meetings held at 2.00 pm on Tuesdays.

Following discussion it was found that more Members would be unable to attend, if any changes were made and it was, therefore,

**Resolved:** *that the next meeting take place as scheduled on 21 February 2006 and that meetings continue to take place at 2.00 pm on Tuesdays.*

## **17 Local Government Act 1972**

**Resolved:** *that, under the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded 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 12A to the Act, by virtue of paragraph 1.*

## **18 Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 1 – Information relating to a Particular Employee)**

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Dr Drummond and

**Resolved:** *that the exempt minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting, held on 7 July 2005, be signed by the Chair as a correct record.*

## **19 Health Panel Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 1 – Information relating to a Particular Employee)**

**Resolved:** *that the exempt minutes of the Health Panel meetings, held on 6 December 2004, 18 May 2005 and 13 September 2005 be noted.*



**20 Applications to Undertake Outside Employment  
(Paragraph 1 – Information relating to a Particular Employee)**

**20a** This report advised of an application to undertake outside employment, which had not been forwarded to the Chair of the Committee for provisional approval. Members considered the application on its merits, having regard to all of the circumstances and the health and safety of employees.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Holyoak and

**Resolved:** *that the Committee’s decision be confirmed in writing in accordance with the procedure agreed.*

A further application had been forwarded to Members of the Committee after the original meeting papers had been sent out. Cllr Holyoak declared a personal interest in this application in that she knew the firefighter involved. Members considered the application on its merits, having regard to all of the circumstances and the health and safety of employees.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Hartin and

**Resolved:** *that the Committee’s decision be confirmed in writing in accordance with the procedure agreed.*

**20b** This report informed Members of three applications to undertake outside employment, which had been approved provisionally by the Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Picken and

**Resolved:** *that the Committee’s decision be confirmed in writing in accordance with the procedure agreed.*

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

**Chair:**.....

**Date:**.....

