

Minutes

Present

Herefordshire: Mr J H R Goodwin, Brigadier P Jones, Mrs M D Lloyd-Hayes, Mrs P M Morgan, Mr D C Taylor and Mr P J Watts.

Worcestershire: Mr T J Bean (Vice-Chairman), Mr S J Clee, Mrs M L Drinkwater, Mrs D E Dudley, Mr R J Farmer, Mr A Fry, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mr J Holden, Mr P T Mills, Mr W E Moore, Mr P A Mould, Mrs F M Oborski, Mrs B Passingham, Mr D W Prodger, Mr C T Smith, Mr R M Udall, Mr G C Yarranton.

Available Papers:

- A. The Agenda paper and appendices referred to (previously circulated).
- B. The Minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 15 February 2007 (previously circulated).

(A copy of the Agenda papers will be attached to the signed Minutes).

(Mr G W Davis (Chairman) in the Chair)

572. (Agenda item 1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr J R Webb.

573. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman – Convention

The Clerk to the Authority referred to the convention which the Authority had adopted whereby the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman would alternate between the two constituent authorities at two year intervals. It was emphasised that any deviance from the convention would require an appropriate decision to suspend the convention.

Resolved: that the convention regarding the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman be suspended until further notice.

574. (Agenda Item 2) Chairman

Resolved: that Brigadier P Jones be elected Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

(Brigadier P Jones in the Chair)

575. (Agenda item 3) Vice-Chairman

Resolved: that Mr S Clee be elected Vice-Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

576. (Agenda Item 4)Declarations of Interest

Mr P A Mould advised the Authority that if the Firefighters Pension Scheme was discussed in such detail that it affected his personal position, he would declare a personal and prejudicial interest. (That proving not to be the case, there was no need for Mr Mould to leave the room during the meeting.)

577. (Agenda item 5) Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

578. (Agenda Item 6) Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from Members of the Public.

579 (Agenda item 7) Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and Appointments to Committees and other Bodies

The Authority considered the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups and the authorisation of the Clerk, following consultation with the leaders of the political groups to make appointments to Committees and other bodies.

Resolved: that

(a) appointments be made to the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority's Committees as follows:

Urgent Decisions Committee

Chairman: Mr S Clee

Appointments Committee

Chairman: Brigadier P Jones

Audit Committee

Chairman: Mrs M L Drinkwater

Vice-Chairman: Mr J R Webb

Best Value Policy and Performance Committee

Chairman: Mr A Fry

Vice-Chairman: Mrs M L Drinkwater

Budget Committee

Chairman: Mr A I Hardman

Vice-Chairman: Mr T J Bean

- (b) Mr J R Webb and Mr R J Farmer be appointed the Authority's representatives on the Standards Committee.**
- (c) the Clerk be authorised, following consultation with the Group Leaders, to take any necessary action to give effect to proportionality requirements, determine the numbers of seats on Committees and other bodies in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders;**
- (d) it be confirmed that the Authority adheres to its previous view that representation and voting on the Local Government Association be as follows:**
 - (i) the Authority's representatives on the Local Government Association be the Group Leaders;**
 - (ii) the 13 Service votes on the Local Government Association Assembly be allocated between its representatives on a politically proportionate basis;and**
 - (iii) the corporate vote on the Local Government Association Assembly be exercised by the Chairman or his nominee;**
- (e) the Chairman is to hold the place and vote(which is available to the Authority) on the Regional Management Board;**
- (f) the Group Leaders be the Authority's appointments to the Regional Management Board;and**
- (g) the Chairman of the Authority be appointed the Director to the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Company.**

580. (Agenda item 8) Service Report

The Authority considered the Service performance and activities for the full year 2006/07. The Officers also gave a Power Point presentation to emphasise the issues referred to in the report.

A Member made reference to a bi-law in Worcester which prohibits swimming in the River Severn and asked if by working with the relevant agencies a similar bi-law could be issued in other Fire Authority areas.

An officer informed the meeting that this issue would be investigated.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

581. (Agenda item 9) Provisional Financial Results 2006/07

The Authority considered a report which provided information on the Revenue and Capital expenditure and income positions for 2006/07.

Resolved: that

(a) the transfer of the revenue under spend to general balances as referred to in paragraph 9 of the report be approved;and

(b) the increase in 2007/08 Capital Budgets arising from expenditure slippage from 2006/07, as referred to in paragraph 15 of the report and subject to the approval of the Budget Committee, be approved.

582. (Agenda item 10) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2006/07 Progress Update

Consideration was given to a report which provided a progress update on the Integrated Risk Management Action Plan for 2006/07.

The Authority noted that the risk review team would continue to review and update the community risk profile during the second year to build the IRMP action plan for 2008/09.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

583. (Agenda item 11) Integrated Risk Management Plan 2008/09

The Authority considered a report regarding the 2008/09 IRMP draft action plan for consultation.

The Authority noted that a budget has been set aside for the consultation involving both Constituent Authority's.

Resolved: that approval be given for the consultation to commence on the IRMP draft action plan for 2008/09.

584. (Agenda item 12) Corporate Plan 2007/08

Consideration was given to a report which sought approval of the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2007/08.

Resolved: that the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2007/08 be approved.

585. (Agenda item 13) Human Resources Update – National Firefighter Selection Tests

The Authority considered a report which detailed the National Firefighters Selection Tests for the recruitment of firefighters and made recommendations on the way forward for the Authority on this issue.

The Chairman noted the officers views on the proposals and took the view that the selection tests must be fair and that those tests which the Authority adopt should be of the highest quality.

The Authority noted that the national selection test proposals were designed to standardise tests throughout the country but that it was for individual Fire and Rescue Authority's to decide on whether these proposals should be implemented in part or fully.

Resolved: that

- a) part of the new National Firefighters Selection Tests for Retained recruitment utilising the job related tests be approved and adopted;and**
- (b) the Authority does not adopt the national application form or national written tests at this time.**

586. (Agenda item 14) Members Allowances Scheme

Consideration was given to a report regarding the level of Members Allowances in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Resolved: that

- (a) subject to (b) below, the Members Allowances scheme for this Authority to continue this financial year at the levels agreed on 25 September 2003 as adjusted annually in line with the Retail Price Index; and**
- (b) the Independent Remuneration Panels of the Constituent Authorities be requested to advise on the level of Members Allowances being adjusted in line with the Consumer Price Index instead of the Retail Price Index and report back accordingly.**

587. (Agenda item 15) Emergencies and Responding to Climate Change

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Authority and made recommendations on work to identify the practical implications for Fire and Rescue Services resulting from changes in climate. A Power Point presentation which referred to the issues in the report was given to the Authority

Resolved: that

- (a) an overarching environmental strategy be developed and be submitted to a future meeting for consideration;**
- (b) the Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP) Steering Group to consider any emerging operational issues, making**

recommendations for action and developing them through future IRMP processes;

- (c) the Chief Fire Officer continues to monitor national developments with regard to the issues referred to in the report and report back to the authority as appropriate; and**
- (d) subject to the above, the report be noted.**

588. (Agenda item 16) Supplementary Crewing Pilot

The Authority considered a report which updated Members on the Supplementary Crewing Pilot and made suggestions on the further development of Supplementary Crewing.

Members noted the need to keep in abeyance the Pilot Project in Redditch at this stage until such time as results from other Districts are evaluated with a view to presenting further options with budgetary implications for Members to consider.

Resolved: that the further development of Supplementary Crewing as described in the objectives set out in paragraph 6 of the report, be endorsed.

589. (Agenda item 17) Unwanted Fire Signals

The Authority considered a report which gave an update on Unwanted Fire Signals with recommendations.

Members noted the response targets over the last year being missed by 3% as a consequence of attendance to automatic fire alarms. It was viewed as necessary that these types of fire alarms should be analysed and reported to the Best Value Policy and Performance Committee.

Resolved: that the issues as set out in the report regarding Unwanted Fire Signals be referred to the Best Value Policy and Performance Committee for further scrutiny, including recommendations for action during 2007/08, with appropriate recommendations being submitted to the Fire and Rescue Authority in due course

590. (Agenda item 18) Our Approach to Equality – The Scheme 2007-2010

Consideration was given to a report which set out a new generic Equality Scheme (circulated in detail to Members) with recommendations.

The Authority was informed that Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority was the first Authority to adopt the Scheme on a generic basis, and other Fire and Rescue Authorities would be emulating this Authority's way of producing the policy.

Resolved: that the new generic Equality Scheme for 2007-10 be approved and adopted.

591. (Agenda item 19) Annual Report of the Standards Committee

The Authority received a report which gave an update in respect of Standards Committee meetings which had taken place in 2006/07.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

592. (Agenda item 20) Review of Code of Corporate Governance

Members received a report relating to a review of the Authority's Corporate Governance and setting out recommended minor updates.

Resolved: that the updates to the Code of Corporate Governance as set out in the report be approved and adopted.

593. (Agenda item 21) Property Update

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the progress of property related matters within the Asset Management Plan.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

594. (Agenda item 22) Regional Fire Control

The Authority considered a report which provided a summary of the status of key elements of Transition planning and project management for the Fire Control Project.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

595. (Agenda item 23) Firelink Radio Project

The Authority considered a report which provided Members with a summary of key project developments and issues for consideration prior to the service signing off the Individual Detailed Design Specification for the Firelink Project.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

596. (Agenda item 24) Human Resources Update - Recruitment

Members considered a report which provided an update on the Service's 2007 Wholetime recruitment campaign.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

597. (Agenda item 25) Road Safety Strategy 2007

The Authority considered a report regarding the launch of the Road Safety Strategy 2007. A copy of the Strategy's executive summary was circulated to Members at the meeting and is attached to the Minutes.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.20 pm.

Chairman.....