

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

16 June 2008, 10.30am

Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester



Present: **Herefordshire:**

Mrs P A Andrews, Mr J H R Goodwin, Brigadier P Jones (Chair), Mrs P M Morgan, Mr D C Taylor, Mr P J Watts.

Worcestershire:

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

639. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman opened the meeting and announced the death of Cllr Betty Passingham. A minute's silence was held in remembrance.

640. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

641. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Brigadier P Jones be elected as Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

642. VICE-CHAIRMAN

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

643. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

644. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2008, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

645. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Authority considered a report that updated Members in respect of Standards Committee meetings that had taken place in 2007/08 and which put forward recommendations to the Authority with regards to Local Assessments.

Following the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which had received the royal assent on 30 October 2007, there were provisions within the Act that required further consideration by Standards Committees. The Standards Committee had met once in 2007/08 on 31 March 2008 to consider the checklist issued by the Standards Board for England regarding Local Assessments and to consider what further actions were needed.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Authority notes the Local Assessments report attached at Appendix 1 to the report and develops the recommendations made by the Standards Board as set out in the report attached at Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (ii) the Standards Committee receives update reports from the Clerk on the Local Assessments as and when they become available;**
- (iii) no change be made to the composition of Membership of the Standards Committee at present;**
- (iv) the Standards Committee be given authority to consider whether to set up a sub-committee or to make arrangements with an adjoining authority with regard to reviews of initial assessments of investigations; and**
- (v) joint training of new Standards Committee Members and Chairmanship training with other authorities be investigated and that any decision with regard to joint training be referred to the Standards Committee for approval.**

646. STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Authority considered the reappointment of the Independent Members of the Standards Committee for a further term of office.

RESOLVED that Dr M Mylechreest, Mr R Rogers, Mr C Emeny, Mr R Gething and Mr D Stevens be reappointed as Independent Members on the Authority's Standards Committee for a further three year term of office to run until the annual meeting of the Authority in June 2011.

647. 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.

RESOLVED that:

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

Appointments Committee

Chairman: Brigadier P Jones

Audit Committee

Chairman: Mrs M L Drinkwater

Vice-Chairman: Mr J R Webb

Budget Committee

Chairman: Mr A I Hardman

Vice-Chairman: Mr TJ Bean

Best Value Policy and Performance Committee

Chairman: Mr A Fry

Vice-Chairman: Mrs M L Drinkwater

Urgent Decisions

Chairman: Mr S J Clee

- ii) **Mr R J Farmer and Mr J R Webb be appointed to the Standards Committee;**
- iii) **the Clerk be authorised following consultation with Group Leaders to take any necessary action to give effect to proportionality requirements, determine the numbers of seats on Committees and make appointments to those Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders;**
- iv) **it be confirmed that the Authority adhere to its previous view that representation and voting on the Local Government Association be as follows:**
 - a) **that the Authority's representatives on the Local Government Association should be the Group Leaders or their nominees;**
 - b) **that the 13 Service votes on the Local Government Association Assembly be allocated between its representatives on a politically proportionate basis; and**
 - c) **the corporate vote on the Local Government Association Assembly be exercised by the Chairman or his nominee;**
- v) **the Chairman or his nominee should hold the place and vote available to the Authority on the LGA's Fire Service Forum;**
- vi) **the Leader of the Conservative Group, Leader of the Labour Group, and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, should be the Authority's appointments to the Regional Management Board; and**
- vii) **the Chairman of the Authority be appointed as a Director of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Company.**

648. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE AGREEMENT

The Authority had previously agreed at its meeting on 11 June 2007 to request that the Independent Remuneration Panels of the Constituent Authorities consider whether the adjustment of Members' Allowances each year should remain in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI) or whether it should be amended to be adjusted in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The Authority considered a report that summarised the feedback from the

Herefordshire Independent Remuneration Panel and the Worcestershire Independent Remuneration Panel.

RESOLVED that Members' Allowances be amended to be adjusted each year in line with the Consumer Price Index.

649. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

650. SERVICE REPORT

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report regarding recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 January 2008 to 31 March 2008.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

651. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL RESULTS 2007/08

The Authority considered information regarding the Revenue and Capital expenditure and income positions for 2007/08. The Director of Finance explained that a net underspend of £139,000 was expected. In view of the significant increases in fuel prices it was suggested that part of the underspend be held in a fuel price reserve and that the balance of the underspend be carried to general balances.

The Authority was informed that there had been underspending in relation to the Capital Budget and that the underspend be added to the 2008/09 budget.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the creation of a fuel price reserve of £0.080m as set out in paragraph 7 of the report be confirmed;**
- ii) the transfer of the revenue under-spend to general balances as set out in paragraph 8 of the report be confirmed; and**
- iii) the increase in 2008/09 Capital Budgets arising from expenditure slippage from 2007/08 as set out in paragraph 11 of the report be approved.**

652. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009/12

The Chief Fire Officer presented the draft 2009/12 three year Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), including the first year action plan. The draft IRMP described how the Authority would reduce community and organisational risk and improve performance within the current budget settlement over the next three years.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the major challenge for the Authority was to continue to improve performance whilst meeting the very severe financial constraints imposed by the Government. The Authority would need to consider options that could save money without reducing service delivery and without increasing the risk to the community. The proposals included a reduction in operational posts, streamlining back office functions, investment in training, strengthening crewing and exploring collaboration with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the Authority that a communication plan had been developed to enable the consultation process to commence as soon as

possible. The process would include a variety of methods of engagement, including partnership working with other organisations.

Mr R Udall informed the Authority that he had received representations from the Unions with regards to the proposed reduction in posts, as outlined in the draft IRMP. Mr C Smith also stated that he had received representations from the Unions with regards to the implementation of the Regional Control Centre, as outlined in the draft IRMP.

RESOLVED that the draft 2009/12 Integrated Risk Management Plan and the 2009/10 Integrated Risk Management Plan Annual Action Plan be approved for consultation.

653. JOINT SERVICE REVIEW WARWICKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Authority considered a report on the progress of the Joint Service Review with Warwickshire County Council and which sought approval for the joint Member/Officer Review Group established in October 2007 to be reconvened.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the joint Member/Officer Review Group established in 2007 be reconvened in line with the previously agreed Terms of Reference to consider the options for Service improvements and efficiencies through closer working arrangements; and**
- ii) the Group be charged with concluding the review, including any stakeholder consultations required to inform its final outcome, with a view to making final recommendations to each Authority in September 2008.**

654. 2008/09 SERVICE PERFORMANCE PLAN

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the 2008/09 Service Performance Plan for approval. The Service Plan set out the Authority's areas of focus for 2008/09 and its performance in 2007/08 and incorporated the Integrated Risk Management Action Plan, Community Safety Strategy, Best Value Performance Plan and the Annual Governance Statement.

The draft Service Performance Plan had been considered by the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee on 29 May 2008 to enable Members to have an input to the document prior to consideration by the Authority.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the 2008/09 Service Performance Plan be approved for publication; and**
- ii) the description of Service Performance Plan for the annual plan document and the description Corporate Plan for the three year plan be adopted.**

655. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS 2008/11

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated the Authority with regards to the new Local Area Agreements (LAAs) for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The Service had improved its profile within the Local Strategic Partnerships in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and had been particularly successful in focusing attention on the

wider community safety agenda.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the current position in the development of the new Local Area Agreements be noted; and**
- ii) the ongoing involvement of the Fire and Rescue Service in the preparation and future delivery of the new Local Area Agreements be noted.**

656. FLOOD SCRUTINY

The Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee Chairman, Mr A Fry, presented the Flood Scrutiny report that had been published following an examination of the Fire and Rescue Authority's contribution following the flooding events in June and July 2007.

RESOLVED that the Flood Scrutiny Report be noted and shared with the Constituent Authorities, District Councils and local MPs.

657. SERVICE SUPPORT UPDATE – NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER SELECTION TESTS

The Authority considered a report that provided an update regarding the implementation of the National Firefighter Selection Tests for the recruitment of Firefighters to the Retained Duty System.

RESOLVED that the changes to the application of the National Firefighter Selection Tests for the recruitment of Retained Duty System Firefighters be noted and as a result of these changes it be noted that the full national selection process will be used by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

658. EQUALITY STANDARD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the meeting that the Authority had successfully been externally validated at level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. She described the positive leading role Hereford and Worcester took nationally with regards to equality and diversity which had been highlighted during the recent launch of the national equality and diversity strategy.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

659. AUTHORITY'S CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report which sought approval of the Authority's Certificate of Commendation to be awarded to individuals who, in the Authority's opinion, had made a significant contribution to the survival of people in extreme danger.

RESOLVED that the 'Authority's Certificate of Commendation' be approved and that nominations be considered for this year's award ceremony to be held on 5 July 2008 at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

660. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the Authority of the new CIPFA/SOLACE

governance framework, part of which referred to the Annual Governance Statement, which had subsumed the Statement of Internal Control.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.04pm

Chairman.....