

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

17 December 2010

Members Present

Brigadier P Jones CBE (Chair), Mrs P Andrews, Mr T Bean, Mrs M Bunker, Mr J Cairns, Mrs L Duffy, Mrs L Eyre Mr J Goodwin, Mr A Hardman, Mrs L Hodgson, Mrs F Oborski, Mr D Prodger MBE, Mr T Spencer, Mr D Taylor, Mr J Thomas, Mr R Udall, Mr P J Watts and Mr G Yarranton.



1. Apologies for Absence

Mr J Champion, Mr S Clee (Vice Chair), Mr D Greenow, Mrs G Hopkins, Mrs J Potter, Mr C Smith and Mr K Taylor.

2. Declaration of Interests (if any)

The Chairman invited any Member to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.

2.1 The Chairman declared a personal interest in Item no. 9. IRMP Consultation and approval of Annual Action Plan 2011/12, recommendation no. 4 re crewing arrangements at Bromsgrove Fire Station as his step-son was employed at that station.

2.2 The Clerk, Anne Brown, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 11. Appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer.

3. Chairman's Announcements

3.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer Post

The Chairman announced that Mr Richard Lawrence had been appointed Assistant Chief Fire Officer on a long-term temporary basis and would assume the role of Director of Service Delivery from 1 January 2011.

He also thanked Tony Prosser for all his hard work for the Service over the past few months and wished him well on his return to West Midlands FRS.

3.2 Celebration of Success

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service celebrated the achievements of nearly 50 members of staff at a Celebration of Success event held at the Guildhall in Worcester on Tuesday 30 November.

3.3 Awards Ceremonies

Firefighters and staff were honoured at an Awards Ceremony held at Hereford Town Hall on Friday 15 October. Lady Susan Darnley, the Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, joined Chief Fire Officer Mark Yates and Councillor Brigadier Peter Jones CBE, Chairman of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority, to present the awards.

3.4 Carol Service

The Chairman, on behalf of those who attended, congratulated the organisers of this year's Carol Service in Pershore Abbey on 16 December, which he said was well organised and very enjoyable.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

- 4.1** *That the minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 28 September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.*
- 4.2** *That the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee held on 8 September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.*
- 4.3** *That the minutes of the meeting of the Budget Committee held on 29 July 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.*

5. Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions submitted by members of the public to be addressed at this meeting.

6. The Chief Fire Officer's Service Report

The Chief Fire Officer informed the Authority of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 July to 30 September 2010.

He told the meeting that there had been a slight rise in incidents during the quarter due to an increase in the number of fires and the number of false alarms from automated fire alarms. The meeting noted the continuing fall in the number of attendances to malicious false alarms.

The Service had been complimented on the manner in which it had responded to a major fire in Hereford City Centre in October and following this incident there had been an intensive fire safety campaign aimed at other business premises in the area.

The meeting welcomed Sue Taylor and Daniel Preece of the Young Firefighters' Association and noted that the Service had been operating a YFA scheme for almost 10 years. The Service was introducing a fully consulted policy for the Scheme and copies were available for Members. The Scheme operated branches in Droitwich and Redditch and was planning another in Evesham. The CFO said that it was an aspiration to expand the Scheme into Herefordshire if suitable volunteers could be found to organise and instruct the YFA there. The meeting heard that Members would receive further details of the joint passing out parade next May for Droitwich and Redditch YFAs. The Chairman and members thanked the YFA representatives for attending and complimented the Association on the work it was doing for young people in the community.

The Service launched its annual Christmas Safety campaign in November at a number of key events in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The CFO told Members that the new Draeger Breather Apparatus set is now in operation throughout the Service and the Chairman welcomed the news that Service personnel now use the best BA available, which will improve their own protection and the safety of the communities they serve.

RESOLVED that the Chief Fire Officer's Service Report be noted.

7. Financial Prospects and Future Planning

The Director of Finance presented revised financial estimates based on the Grant Settlement announced on Monday 13 December 2010. He told the meeting that the formula grant and distribution had been rebalanced and that the outcome for this Service was not as bad as had been expected. He felt that this may be partly as a result of the lobbying of local MPs and the Fire Minister by the CFO and the case put forward by officers of the Service. While the overall reduction for stand alone Fire and Rescue Services was -6.7% for 2011/2012, the reduction for HWFRS was -2.4%, but this would still present a challenge for the coming year. The settlement for 2012/2013 was an increase in grant of +1.7%.

He told the Meeting that a Budget Planning Seminar for Members would be held in mid January 2011 and the proposed budget considered in more detail by the Policy and Resources Committee on 28 January, before being considered for approval by the Authority on 16 February 2011.

RESOLVED that the Report be noted.

8. Fees and Charges

The CFO told the Meeting that as part of the comprehensive review of the Authority's finances that options for charges for Special Services were under consideration. The main areas for consideration were:

- Large Animal Rescues
- Lift Rescues
- Assistance to the Environment Agency

The Policy and Resources Committee had considered these options on 8 December and recommended as follows:

- a) The Authority does not introduce charges for Large Animal Rescues;***
- b) The Authority consider the proposals to charge for all rescues from lifts or only after the first rescue in any year; and***
- c) The Authority puts in place protocols for FRA costs when assisting the Environment Agency to be invoiced for onward recovery.***

The Authority unanimously agreed with recommendations a) and c) and

RESOLVED

- i) That the Authority does not introduce charges for Large Animal Rescues; and***
- ii) The Authority puts in place protocols for recovery of FRA costs when assisting the Environment Agency to be invoiced for onward recovery.***

The Authority considered options for charging for lift rescues and heard that some Services do not respond to such calls. Members felt that the Authority should continue to carry out lift rescues but that there should be a charge on the owners and/or management companies who were repeat "offenders", in order to encourage better lift maintenance and more efficient use of the resources of the Authority.

It was proposed and seconded that the Authority should attend all calls for lift rescues and introduce a scheme for charging for repeat calls to the same building. Ten Members voted in favour of the proposal, 2 against and 4 Members abstained.

RESOLVED that the Authority continues to attend all calls for lift rescues and introduces charges for repeat calls to the same premises.

9. IRMP Consultation and Approval of Annual Action Plan 2011/12

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided the Authority with details of the consultation process for the 2011/12 IRMP Action Plan and a summary of the key themes from the feedback received. She said that these had been considered by Principal Officers, Group Leaders and the IRMP Steering Group and at the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 December, which recommended that the Authority approve the draft proposals as presented.

RESOLVED

i) That the Authority notes the consultation process and the feedback received; and

ii) That the Authority approves the amended 2011/12 IRMP Action Plan.

10. Strategic Risk Register

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the Draft Strategic Risk Register for approval by the Authority.

The meeting heard that the reviewed and updated Strategic Risk Register was shared with Mr Peter Watts, Risk Management Member Champion and Group Leaders for their input on 18 October 2010, advised by Principal Officers. The draft Register was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 December and recommended for approval by the Authority.

The DCFO was pleased to report that the direction of travel for Strategic Risk was moving downwards, which was a credit to the hard work that had taken place across the Service in strengthening key control measures where necessary.

In summary, 10 items on the Strategic Risk Register had reduced scores and only two items saw the risk score revised upwards, namely unavailability of a key item of equipment (No 13) and change in economic and/or political environment causing a reduction in real terms of grants and/or other income.

The Authority noted that the live Strategic Risk Register would be monitored and updated on an ongoing basis with exception reporting to Principal Management Officers and would be formally reported to Members annually, with significant changes reported to the Audit Committee as appropriate.

RESOLVED that the Authority approve the revised Strategic Risk Register.

11. **Appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer**

Mrs Anne Brown, Acting Clerk to the Authority, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the meeting.

The Chief Fire Officer told the meeting that in June 2009, the Authority confirmed the appointment of Ms Charlie Adan (Interim Deputy Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council) as Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority and that she delegated her clerking duties to Herefordshire Council's Interim Head of Governance, Mrs Anne Brown.

Ms Adan was due to leave her interim position with Herefordshire Council on 13 December 2010 and Herefordshire Council suggested that the Interim Head of Law and Governance (Mrs Anne Brown) formally took over the role of Clerk, rather than the new post-holder, to ensure consistency and continuity of service.

It was proposed to the Authority that Mrs Anne Brown continue to undertake clerking duties and be formally appointed to replace Ms Adan as Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer said that Mrs Brown was ideally placed to act as Clerk/Monitoring Officer, due to her previous experience in Local Government generally and this Authority in particular.

It was also proposed that the appointment be made for a three month period, which would provide an opportunity to carry out a review of the provision of the Clerk/Monitoring Officer role to ensure that it was the most effective method of meeting the Authority's statutory requirements. The interim arrangement and this review would be considered by the Authority at its meeting in February 2011.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Authority confirm the appointment of Mrs Anne Brown as an Interim Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority with immediate effect, for a three month period;*
- ii) That the Authority carry out a review of the provision of the Clerk/Monitoring Officer role; and*
- iii) That the review and the interim arrangement be considered at the Authority meeting in February 2011.*

12. **The Information Commissioner's Office Model Publication Scheme Review**

The Clerk presented the revised Publication Scheme for approval by the Authority.

The meeting heard that Officers had reviewed the Publication Scheme and amended it in accordance with the Service's governance arrangements. The draft review was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 December and recommended for approval by the Authority. The Clerk told the meeting that the amended Scheme would go live in January 2011.

RESOLVED that the Authority approve the revised Publication Scheme.

13. Policy and Resources Committee Report

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, Cllr Adrian Hardman, presented the report of proceedings of the Committee Meetings held on 1 November and 8 December 2010.

RESOLVED *that the report be noted.*

14. Audit Committee Report

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Cllr Derek Prodger, informed the Authority of the proceedings of the Committee Meeting held on 7 October 2010.

The Meeting finished at 12.02 pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairman