

**Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Resources Committee
7 March 2012**



Minutes

Members Present

Mr K Taylor (Chairman),
Mr T Bean, Mr B Bullock, Mr A Hardman, Mrs J Potter, Mr D Prodger MBE, Mr C Smith, Mr J Thomas, and Mr G Yarranton (Vice-Chairman).

No	Item
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1.	Apologies for Absence
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Apologies were noted from: Mrs M Bunker, Mrs E Eyre, Brigadier P Jones, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes, Mr D Taylor and Mr R Udall.

2.	Named Substitutes
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Mr J Thomas was appointed as a substitute for Mr D Taylor.

3.	Declaration of Interests (if any)
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The Chairman invited Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests against any of the Agenda items. (It was noted that Councillor J Potter had previously declared at a Policy and Resources meeting in 2010 her interest regarding being a governor of Bromsgrove College whose land was to be used for the fire station – agenda item 8, Asset Management Strategy – Bromsgrove Fire Station refers).

4.	Confirmation of Minutes
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RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 25 January 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5.	IRMP 2011/12 Recommendation 4 : Fire Cover Review
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A report was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the outcomes of the review and asked the Committee to consider the recommendations and approve a period of engagement with affected stakeholders.

The Chief Fire Officer reaffirmed the basis of the fire cover review. Three elements had been reviewed namely:

1. The current crewing arrangements at Bromsgrove.
2. The requirement for a third appliance at Hereford, Worcester and Redditch Stations.
3. The appropriate number of personnel on each watch at wholetime and

day crewed stations.

(Mr A Hardman entered the meeting at 10.35 am)

Members were advised by the Chief Fire Officer that the review had been a substantial piece of work which had been consulted on for a 12 week period. Furthermore, he explained that the proposals would not require redundancies as it was envisaged that any reduction in staff could be achieved through the loss of existing uniformed staff through 'natural turnover' during the next three years. Additionally the proposals would not change fire cover provision but savings could be achieved that meant that personnel were used more efficiently.

Members were advised by the Clerk that it was intended to bring the consultation results back to the Policy and Resources Committee on 7 June 2012 before referring the matter to the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 20 June 2012. However Members were advised that if the responses from the consultation required in depth analysis it may not prove possible for the consultation responses to come back to the Committee. The Committee agreed that should this occur, subject to the Chairman's agreement, the Committee would recommend to the FRA the acceptance of the recommendations as set out in the papers for this meeting and the feedback on the consultation would be taken straight to the FRA meeting on 20 June 2012.

RESOLVED:

- i) The 2011/12 IRMP Recommendation 4 Fire Cover Review be noted; and**
- ii) The following recommendations be subjected to eight weeks' consultation with stakeholders:**
 - to reduce the number of firefighting staff on each watch at the three existing day crewed fire stations (Malvern, Evesham and Droitwich) from eight to seven;**
 - to reduce the number of firefighting staff on each watch at Hereford and Worcester fire stations from 14 to 12.5 (average between the two stations);**
 - to implement a new crewing pattern (Day Crewing Plus) at Bromsgrove, leading to a reduction in the establishment from 28 to 14;**
 - there are no changes to the provision of the third Retained Duty System (RDS) appliance at Hereford, Worcester and Redditch; and**
- iii) In the event that the responses from the consultation require in depth analysis thus preventing them being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 7 June 2012, that following**

consultation with the Chairman, the Policy and Resources Committee recommend that the FRA accept the recommendations set out in i) and ii) above at their meeting on 20 June 2012.

6. Response to Consultation on the Draft National Framework for England

A report was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the Draft National Framework for England which was currently being consulted on and sought approval for a proposed response to the consultation.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the previous National Framework had expired but that the proposed new National Framework would be of an open ended duration. It was a requirement of Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to have a National Framework which should be consulted on and Fire and Rescue Authorities were required to have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions.

A robust response had been prepared but the Chief Fire Officer advised that the new National Framework was subtly different and the word 'must' was used a good deal which made the Framework appear to be overly prescriptive. Furthermore, the Chief Fire Officer advised that the proposed response concurred with those from other Fire and Rescue Authorities who were also responding in a similar vein.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee approves on behalf of the Authority the response to consultation on the Draft National Framework for England.

7. Fire Authority Plan 2011-2012 – Third Quarter Performance Analysis

A report was considered that provided the Policy and Resources Committee with a summary of the third quarter performance against the Fire Authority Plan 2011-2012.

The Group Commander Performance and Information presented the report and drew Members' attention to the following:

- Total incident numbers had reduced and were the best for Quarter 3 in the last five years.
- Fire attendance figures had increased but some good intervention work had been undertaken in this area.
- The number of chimney fires had decreased significantly.
- There had been a reduction in the number of vehicle fires and outdoor fires.
- There had been a reduction in the number of injuries in accidental dwelling fires.
- Secondary fire numbers had increased by 60% but this could be attributed to the unseasonal weather that had been experienced into October 2011.
- The target on Attendance Standards had been missed but Members were assured that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken in this area. The Chief Fire Officer commented that the new Fire Control which

would be operational shortly would improve this situation as there was a new method for call handling which would improve attendance at incidents.

- There had been a small increase in the number of fires at non-domestic properties.
- Sickness levels were above the target set. It was noted that non-uniformed sickness had increased and interventions were in place to assist with this.
- The year-end indicated that the Authority would not meet its targets in the following areas:
 - i. injuries from primary fires;
 - ii. secondary fires;
 - iii. total number of fires; and
 - iv. fires in Business addresses.

Members were advised that some targets had been missed by only one digit. To this end it was envisaged that it would be useful for the Service to adopt 'bands of tolerance' in some categories.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee note the content of the report.

8. Asset Management Strategy – Bromsgrove Fire Station

A report was considered that outlined the progress of the project to provide a combined Police and Fire Station for Bromsgrove and sought authority to formally sign contracts that would secure a lease on the proposed development with freehold ownership remaining with West Mercia Police Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer reiterated the background to the project and commented that it was progressing well and that Bromsgrove District Council's Planning Committee had passed the planning application. It was now necessary to secure a lease between West Mercia Police Authority and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority. The lease would run for a period of thirty years and then was likely to be renewed for a further period of thirty years. Members were advised that the annual Service Level Agreement cost would be broadly similar to those costs currently paid to run the station but the Authority would not have responsibility for the maintenance of the fabric of the building as the Police would own the freehold of the building.

Members learnt that the project was the first of its type and had been progressed as part of Worcestershire's Capital Asset Pathfinder.

RESOLVED:

Authorisation be given to the Chief Fire Officer to progress through to completion the project to provide a combined Police and Fire Station in

Bromsgrove; and

- i) ***authorisation be given to the Chief Fire Officer to sign the contracts to secure a lease and Service Level Agreement between West Mercia Police Authority and Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority provided the costs are within the parameters set out within the report to the Policy and Resources Committee.***

9. Joint Consultative Committee Update

A report was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the proceedings of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held in January 2012.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee note the content of the report.

10. Health and Safety Liaison Panel Update

A report was considered that provided the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Liaison Panel.

The Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to the extensive amount of work that had been carried out with regard to health and safety related training. It was noted that the Panel had also considered two recent health and safety related issues namely one relating to a 135 ladder incident and another concerning issues with breathing apparatus. It was noted that these two issues had been resolved to the satisfaction of both staff and the Trade Unions.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee notes the content of this report.

11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

In the opinion of the Clerk to the Authority, agenda item 12, Asset Management Strategy Strategic Training Facilities, was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Authority. It was therefore recommended that the meeting should not be open to the public and press at the time that agenda item 12 was considered.

RESOLVED: that the press and public be excluded because in the opinion of the Clerk to the Authority Agenda Item 12 was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Authority.

12. Asset Management Strategy Strategic Training Facilities (STFs)

A report was considered that sought approval from the Policy and Resources Committee to proceed with the fourth Strategic Training Facility through to project completion.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee approves the progression through to completion of a fourth Strategic Training Facility at Peterchurch Fire Station.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am.

Signed: _____
Chairman.

Date: _____