

**Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority  
Policy and Resources Committee  
5 September 2012**



## **Minutes**

### **Members Present**

Mr G Yarranton (Vice-Chairman)

Mr T Bean, Mrs E Eyre, Mr A Hardman, Brigadier P Jones CBE, Mr D W Prodger MBE, Mr C Smith, Mr D Taylor and Mr R Udall.

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>
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<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>
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Before receiving apologies for absence, the Chairman introduced the new Head of Legal Services, Mr Nigel Snape, to the Committee.

Apologies were noted from: Mr B Bullock, Mrs M Bunker, Mr J P Campion, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes, Mrs J Potter and Mr K Taylor.

<b>2.</b>	<b>Named Substitutes</b>
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No substitutes were appointed.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests (if any)</b>
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The Chairman invited Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary, or other interests against any of the Agenda items and none were declared.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Confirmation of Minutes</b>
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**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 7 June 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

<b>5.</b>	<b>Fire and Rescue National Framework for England</b>
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A report was considered that gave a briefing on the new Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which was published on 11 July 2012.

Members were advised that there were 3 priorities for Fire and Rescue Authorities namely:

- To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately;
- Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service; and

- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

*Mr A Hardman entered the meeting at 10.35 am.*

Within the Framework the four key areas were the Integrated Risk Management Plan, Assurance, National Resilience and Accountability.

Whilst a 14 week consultation had been held, the National Framework document remained largely unchanged. There had been a few minor textual changes and some additional clarification but the Government remained constant on the use of the word 'must.'

There was some concern about the extent of information required to ensure transparency to communities and Government as required through Annual Assurance Statements.

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

## **6. Budget Monitoring Report 2012-13**

A report was considered that outlined the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2012/13.

The Treasurer presented the report and highlighted that since the FRA had approved the budget allocation in February 2012 an allocation amendment had been made to allow for the restructuring that had taken place of the Senior Management Team.

Members were advised that it was forecast that there would be an underspend of approximately £570,000 and that four areas had contributed to the underspend namely:

- Whole time uniform pay.
- Redundancy costs being charged to the 2011/12 budget.
- Further economies identified by budget holders.
- Offset by increased costs from the Retained Duty System (RDS) settlement.

With regard to the Capital Budget it was reported that movement within it had been slow as there were contracts which were still subject to tender or acceptance.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

*Mr C Smith left the meeting at 10.45 am and returned at 10.50 am*

## **7. The Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Plan 2012-13 Quarter 1 Performance Analysis**

A report was considered that provided a summary of Quarter 1 performance against the Fire and Rescue Authority Plan 2012-13.

The following areas were highlighted:

- Total incident number had decreased significantly (by 40%).
- There had been a significant reduction in the number of fires but chimney fires had increased from 21 to 38.
- With regard to attendance standards there had been a reduced performance but it was intended that this would be reviewed as part of the Integrated Risk Management (IRMP) process.
- With regard to Performance Indicator Tolerance Levels, indicators were within their 10% range except for the indicator regarding non-uniform sickness. Members were advised that the problem related to long-term sickness but proactive measures were being taken to address this issue.
- With regard to retained availability there had been a reduction of 2.7% of all retained pumps when compared with the same quarter last year. The Chief Fire Officer outlined some mitigating circumstances relating to the stations where the biggest drop in performance had occurred. It was noted that availability above 90% of retained pumps was considered to be good and this quarter availability had been 90.5%.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

*Mr C Smith left the meeting at 11.00 am.*

## **8. Treasury Management Activities 2011/12**

A report was considered that outlined treasury management activities for 2011/12.

The Treasurer presented the report. Members were advised that the banking arrangements and treasury management function was carried out by Worcestershire County Council under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). As part of the SLA arrangements a proportionate risk was taken depending on where the County Council invested the money. However, it was impossible for the County Council to invest the Authority's money in high risk environments as it was pooled to ensure that the investment processes were as risk free as possible. It was noted that the average rate of return on investments was 0.26%.

Prudential indicators were set by the FRA as part of the overall budget and were within the limits of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

## **9. Financial Prospects 2013-14**

There were five key areas of funding change which were being reviewed by the Government:

- Base-lining of current expenditure and grant (for setting the future business rate retention arrangements).
- The size of the fire 'grant' pot.
- Business Rate Retention Scheme.
- Localisation of Council Tax Support arrangements.
- Council Tax policy and the implications of the 2012/13 freeze grant.

The Treasurer advised Members that to date, although there had been a significant amount of new information, it was considered to be indicative only and insufficiently detailed to be more accurate than the current Medium Term Financial Plan assumption.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

## **10. Employment Monitoring 2011/12**

A report was considered regarding employment monitoring for the year ended 31 March 2012.

The key trends were highlighted:

- Applications for employment and particularly the increase in the number of females applying to become retained firefighters.
- Applications for promotion – noting that there had been 76 more applications than last year.
- Leavers – noting that 68 employees left the Service compared with 83 last year.
- Disciplinarys – noting that there were 8 formal disciplinarys this year compared with 3 last year.
- Grievances – noting that this year there were 9 compared with 5 last year.
- Bullying and Harassment Complaints – noting that there were 4 such complaints this year compared with 3 last year.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

## **11. Progress of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Implementation Plan**

A report was considered on the progress of the Retained Duty System (RDS)

Implementation Plan.

Members were advised that a three year action plan had been drawn up and that the objectives from year two were substantially complete or in progress.

A detailed appendix was considered which outlined the work that had been undertaken during year two of the implementation plan. It was considered that the work undertaken would improve the safety, competence and operational efficiency of the retained duty staff.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

**12. Wet Weather Conditions June/July 2012**

A briefing report on the effect of the wet weather conditions on the Service during the period 21 June 2012 to 20 July 2012 was considered.

It was noted that as a result of the severe wet weather conditions business continuity measures were invoked to deal with the 1103 calls that were made in the period 21 June to 20 July 2012. This was a significant increase compared to normal but the Service had coped well and arrangements had proved to be resilient.

**13. RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

**IRMP Recommendation 3 Fire Cover Review 2012-13**

A report was considered that contained the proposed Terms of Reference for the IRMP Action Plan, Recommendation 3, Fire Cover Review 2012-13.

It was proposed that the review would look at the following areas namely:

- Locations
- Crewing Systems
- Appliance Numbers
- Special Appliances
- Review of Borders
- Interoperability

The following areas were considered to be outside the scope of the review:

- National Resilience assets and strategy
- Water assets and strategy
- Flexible Duty System
- Animal Rescue
- Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) Policy
- Other areas currently under review and pending implementation will not be included

It was anticipated that a report would be brought back to the Committee in six months' time.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee agree the Terms of Reference for Recommendation 3 Fire Cover Review 2012-13.**

**14. Equality and Diversity Advisory Group Update**

A review was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the key areas of discussion at the Equality and Diversity Group meeting held in July 2012.

It was noted that the Chief Fire Officer now chaired this Group and that the Group's Terms of Reference had been changed. Furthermore it was noted that a representative from each Department of the Service was a member of the Group.

The following was highlighted:

- There was no longer a dedicated Equality and Diversity Officer within the Service and Human Resources provided the specialist support.
- The Equality Scheme would expire in March 2013.
- An A5 booklet outlining the Service's Ethical Framework would be published shortly and training would be provided to Members following the May 2013 elections.

**15. RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

**Joint Consultative Committee Update**

A report was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since June 2012.

Members considered the key items that were still under discussion which included:

- Review of allowances.
- Use of Driver/Officer in Charge (OIC) on appliances.
- Part-time Workers' Settlement.
- Arrangements for Retained Duty Staff (RDS) working on Bank Holidays.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer who now chaired the Joint Consultative Committee was optimistic that these items would be resolved.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

**16. Health and Safety Liaison Panel Update**

A report was considered that provided the Policy and Resource Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and

Safety Liaison Panel. These included:

- Discussion on the previous quarter's health and safety performance.
- The issue of 13.5m ladders reaching the end of their usable life.
- An overview of vehicle accidents.
- A further review and update of reported incidents of abuse to staff.

**RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.**

The meeting concluded at 11.54 am.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_