



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 18 October 2023, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr D Boatright-Greene, Mr D Boulter, Mrs J Carwardine, Mr D Davies, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Ms N McVey, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Phillips, Ms D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall

0441 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr B Brookes, Cllr D Chambers, Cllr J Kenyon, Cllr E Marshall, Cllr J Monk, Cllr R Morris, Cllr L Robinson, Mr K Taylor and Cllr T Wells.

0442 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

0443 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements for this meeting.

0444 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

0445 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 21 June 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0446 Statement of Assurance 2022-23

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented the draft Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for approval and publication.

Members were informed that the Statement of Assurance 2022-23 was designed to provide assurance on governance, financial and operational matters. Much of the information in the Statement was already publicly available elsewhere and links were provided in the document as advised in national guidance.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Assurance 2021-22 be approved for publication.

0447 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q1 2023/2024

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention updated Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 December 2021.

Members noted that this was the last update covering up to the end of August 2023 with work continuing to discharge from the improvement plan.

It was anticipated that following the latest inspection in June and July, the formal report would be publicly available in November 2023. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that although the report was currently embargoed, he was very pleased to receive the report and the significant progress had been acknowledged.

[Cllr R Udall entered the meeting at 10.39am].

Members noted that although this report would be the final update on the Areas for Improvement highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report dated 15 December 2021, work would continue to progress the remaining actions through to completion.

[Cllr A Hardman entered the meeting at 10.46am].

RESOLVED that the progress achieved towards addressing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan be noted. In particular that:

- i) 86% of the actions in the Improvement Plan were now complete;***
- ii) work continued during Q2 to progress the remaining actions through to completion; and***

iii) this report would be the final update on the Areas for Improvement highlighted in the HMICFRS inspection report dated 15 December 2021.

0448 Reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS)

The Chief Fire Officer provided Members with a review of Unwanted Fire Signals and to consider the benefits/disbenefits of attending in response to automatic fire alarms.

The HMICFRS had identified the Service should ensure it effectively addresses the burden of false alarms, therefore this review was timely and necessary.

A range of options to decrease the number of false alarms was put to Members. Following discussion, Members agreed that the best option was to introduce a risk-based call filtering methodology during the hours of 08:00 to 18:00 for specific categories of calls using the nationally recognised FSEC premises risk groupings. This would allow the Authority to determine and maintain a prompt response to higher risk premises and those premises where a refined call filtering process may be applied.

Members were assured that Fire Control operators would be trained to issue supportive advice to those properties not being attended as a result of this proposal. A range of measures would also be taken to warn and prepare those premises likely to be affected.

Members agreed that a review in three years would be appropriate, with flexibility to bring the date forward if Members deemed it necessary.

RESOLVED that:

i) HWFRS continue the existing policy of maintaining an effective response to AFAs at all premises where there is a sleeping risk, including:

- ***domestic dwellings; and***
- ***other residential premises (FSEC Groups A and B) such as;***

Hospitals

Care Homes

Houses in multiple occupation

Hostels

Hotels;

ii) a risk-based call filtering methodology be introduced during the lower risk periods 08:00-18:00 hrs for AFAs at commercial premises within Fire Service Emergency Cover Groups C and D (but excluding public buildings and places of further education and schools) i.e.

Shops

Factories

Offices

Other Workplaces;

iii) the previous decision taken in September 2013 of not charging for false alarm AFAs on the grounds that the cost of recovery measures were likely to exceed the income generated, be reaffirmed; and a further review of the policy be undertaken within three years (or sooner as appropriate).

0449 Fire Alliance Fire Control Project Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress of the Fire Alliance Fire Control Project.

Members were pleased to note that the contract for the procurement of a jointly funded Command and Control system had been awarded to Motorola. This would provide more resilience with being able to lean into other Fire Services should the need arise. The replacement system would provide a more reliable, flexible and resilient product with increased functionality to better support the work of the control staff and streamline the flow of information between the control rooms and operational crews which mitigates risk to firefighters and the public.

Working in partnership has not only benefitted significant cost savings but also improved the ability to scale up operations to deal with multiple calls and major incidents.

RESOLVED that the decision to award the contract for a new joint fire control system in partnership with Shropshire FRS, Cleveland FRS and County Durham & Darlington FRS to Motorola, following a competitive procurement exercise, be noted and approved.

0450 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 19 July 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

meeting held on 19 July 2023 be received and noted.

0451 Minutes of the Appointments Committee

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Appointments Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appointments Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023 be received and noted.

0452 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023 be received and noted.

At the end of the meeting the Vice-Chairman informed Members that a contract was in the process of being agreed for the temporary site of Hereford Fire Station and Members would be informed as soon as the contracts had been signed.

Members were also reminded of the Resource Review briefing sessions that were being held in November, details had been emailed to Members and a response for attendance was requested as soon as possible.

The Meeting ended at: 11:37

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman