



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 10 June 2020,10:30

**Chairman: Mr R Phillips**  
**Vice-Chairman: Mr P Tuthill**

## **Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr R C Adams, Mr A Amos, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs K Hey, Dr C A Hotham, Mr R J Morris, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Dr K Pollock, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mrs D Toynbee, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall

**Also in attendance: Mrs Tracey Onslow, West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

### **258 Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Mr R J Phillips be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

### **259 Election of Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Mr P Tuthill be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

### **260 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr S Bowen and Cllr A Fry.

### **261 Declarations of Interest (if any)**

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

Board (England & Wales).

## 262 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Deputy Chief Fire Officer John Hodges for his time with the Service as this was the last Authority meeting before his retirement in September. He said his diligent and professional standards earned him the greatest respect by the Fire Authority and staff. The Chairman also congratulated Keith Chance on his temporary promotion to Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Jon Pryce for his temporary promotion to Assistant Chief Fire Officer. Congratulations were also passed to Alison Buttle who had qualified as a Solicitor on 1 June 2020.

The Chairman then asked the Chief Fire officer to update Members on the flooding events earlier in the year including Storm Dennis, Covid-19 and the long period of dry weather.

*[Cllr A Hardman joined the meeting at 10.43am].*

Cllr Pollock thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the help the Service provided to the residents in Tenbury during the floods.

The Chairman then informed Members of the following:

- Since the last Fire Authority meeting the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman had sent out several briefing notes updating Members on the Service's activities.

*[Cllr A Amos joined the meeting at 10.46am].*

- In early March, the Chairman, together with Cllr Oborski, attended the LGA Fire Conference in Blackpool. The conference speakers included the lead Home Office civil servant Luke Edwards, Zoe Billingham (HMICFRS), Matt Wrack (FBU) and our own Chief Fire Officer who spoke as the lead national Fire Officer for Climate Change. He reminded Members that a copy of his presentation had been forwarded to Members recently. Other topics included the response to the State of Fire and Rescue report 2019 by Sir Thomas Winsor, preparation of the submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fire Formula, post Grenfell and cultural change.
- The Chairman attended a virtual Fire Commission meeting which included an address from the new Fire Minister Lord Greenhalgh who is a former leader of Hammersmith and Fulham and was one of Boris Johnson's Deputy Mayors for Policing and Crime.
- The Chairman worked with Employer and employee representatives on the sector response to HM Treasury consultation on the rectification of the pension scheme as a result

- of the Sargent/McCloud judgement.
- The HM Inspectorate postponed the Service's second inspection that was due this month due to Covid-19.
- Members would be receiving a summary of the latest position on the Judicial Reviews regarding the Police Commissioners desire to take over the two FRAs of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Telford and the Wrekin.
- The Chairman attended many meetings with Officers, National Lead Members, Group Leaders and continued to work with colleagues in Shropshire.

*[Cllr K Pollock left the meeting at 10.50am].*

## **263 Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

## **264 Confirmation of Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 12 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at an appropriate time.

## **265 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies**

A report was presented to consider the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups, appointments to those Committees and to outside bodies (insofar as is necessary).

**RESOLVED** that:

- i) the allocation of Committee seats to political groups as set out at Appendix 1 be noted;
- ii) the current Committee membership as set out in Appendix 1 be retained for 2020/2021, as agreed by Group Leaders;
- iii) Cllr F Oborski and Cllr T Baker-Price be appointed as Member Champions of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- iv) the current practice for representation and voting on the Local Government Association as set out in Appendix 2 be continued;
- v) the place and vote on the Local Government Association Fire Commission continues to be exercised by the Chairman of the Authority; and
- vi) the Chairman of the Authority continues as the Member

**representative on the Place Partnership Ltd. Shareholder Group.**

## **266 Provisional Financial Out-turn 2019-20**

The Treasurer presented a report with the provisional financial results for 2019-20 and the Treasury Management Activities for 2019-20.

Members were reminded that detailed budget monitoring reports had been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis throughout 2019-20 and subject to specific areas highlighted in the report, the out-turn was consistent with the reporting.

There was a query regarding the alliance costs, of which £200,000 had been set aside for the Alliance programme with Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority. Members were informed that approximately £150,000 was committed to the shared cost of the joint ICT post, to be spread over three years with the Alliance Reserve to meet the agreed costs in future years as they occur.

With regard to the capital budget a Member requested an update on Redditch fire station. The Head of Legal Services assured Members that a substantial amount of work had already been undertaken and an update would be sent out to Members next week.

Members were reminded that due to the pandemic the Statement of Accounts this year needed to be signed off by the Treasurer no later than 31 August 2020 and approved no later than 30 November 2020, rather than the normal dates of 31 May and 31 July respectively. The Treasurer confirmed that he had actually signed them on 29 May and that they were on track for the Audit and Standards Committee to approve the Accounts at their scheduled meeting on 8 October 2020.

The Deputy PCC queried why the Legal Services budget had increased. The Head of Legal Services explained that this was due to the Judicial Review which had incurred £37,000 costs and the remainder included employment tribunal costs.

With regard to Treasury Management activities, in 2019/20 additional borrowing of £3.000m was taken, in line with the Capital Financing Requirement, to replace temporary funding of capital from internal cash balances and anticipating the maturity of £1.500m of loans in 2020/21.

The Treasurer was pleased to inform Members that the Prudential Code Indicators for 2019-20 were within the limits set by the Authority and no

matters required further action.

**RESOLVED** that the Authority:

- i) Notes the provisional financial results for 2019/20;**
- ii) Notes the transfers between reserves previously approved in accordance with the Reserves Strategy, or approved by the Fire Authority on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 as below;**
  - a) £0.454m from the Budget Reduction Reserves;***
  - b) £0.381m from the new Dimensions Reserve;***
  - c) £0.300m from General Balances;***
  - d) £0.130m from the Pensions Reserve;***
  - e) £0.285m to the July 2017 Pay Award Reserve; and***
  - f) £0.250m to the Broadway Fire Station Reserve***
- iii) Notes the revised transfers arising from timing differences previously approved in accordance with the Reserves Strategy or approved by the Fire Authority on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 as below as below;**
  - a) £0.115m from the Property Maintenance Reserve;***
  - b) £0.270m from the Equipment Reserve; and***
  - c) £0.242m to the Prevention Reserve***
- iv) Approves the final transfers to Earmarked Reserves as set out below:**
  - a) An additional £0.130m from the Pension Reserve;***
  - b) £0.188m to the Alliance Collaboration Reserve; and***
  - c) £0.164m to the Day Crew Plus (DCP) change reserve.***
- v) Notes that the Treasurer will certify the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts, in accordance within the regulatory time-scale, of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020;**
- vi) Notes that the Audit of the accounts will be undertaken by Grant Thornton LLP; and**
- vii) Confirms that the Prudential Indicators for 2019/20 were within**

***the limits set by the Authority and no matters require further action.***

**267 Fire Authority Annual Report 2020-21**

The Fire Authority Annual Report 2020-21 was presented by the Chief Fire Officer for adoption and approval for publication.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that this is a key document that presents an overview of the Service's activities over the past 12 months, including a summary of overall performance and achievements, and outlines plans for 2020-21.

A Member congratulated Ross on Wye station for securing runners-up spot in the extrication section of the United Kingdom Rescue Organisation National Challenge and earning a place at the World Rescue Challenge 2020.

The Service was congratulated on producing clear graphics in the report that made the report worthy of distribution.

**RESOLVED that the Authority adopts the draft Fire Authority Annual Report 2020-21 and approves it for publication, subject to any final minor changes as agreed by the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chairman.**

**268 Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 – Consultation**

The Chief Fire Officer presented the Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025 to Members for approval for public consultation.

Members were informed that this Plan had been drafted in conjunction with Shropshire FRS's preparation of their IRMP for 2021-25, both of which were due to be published on 1 April 2021. It was proposed to conduct the consultation primarily online over the coming summer months, given the present Covid-19 circumstances. Members were assured that full details of the consultation and analysis of responses would be presented back to the Fire Authority for consideration at the earliest opportunity to ensure the final CRMP 2021-2025 could be published on 1 April 2021.

Members were reminded that this Plan had not identified the need to make any further changes to stations or crewing arrangements, at this time, unless a significant external issue had an impact on the

sustainability of the Service's finances.

A Member was concerned about fire cover in the west of Worcester due to the expansion of housing. The Chief Fire Officer assured the Member that the Plan was appropriate for the current time, it had taken into account the changes in demographics and the scale of housing. He also explained that new build houses have the most up to date fire standards.

A Member also had concerns with fire cover in Herefordshire and the recruitment of on-call firefighters. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the on-call stations in the County generally had excellent availability and a lot of work had recently been undertaken for on-call recruitment.

There was discussion about the attendance standard and why it needed to change based on the changing nature of risks since its adoption in 2008-2009 and other factors effecting it, such as traffic conditions.

Members were advised that they would be informed of the start date of the consultation period when it was known.

**RESOLVED that the Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 be approved for for public consultation.**

## **269 Place Partnership Ltd**

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on matters relating to Place Partnership Ltd and the Authority's property function.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that due to Redditch Borough Council and Worcester City Council withdrawing from the partnership in 2018 and now Worcestershire County Council giving 12 months' notice to terminate their service contract with PPL with effect from 31 March 2021, discussions needed to take place between the remaining partners; Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority, West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police.

Due to Worcestershire County Council accounting currently for approximately one third of PPL's workload, it forced the remaining partners to consider whether they wished to continue with the current arrangements, make changes to the structure or ownership model of PPL or look to provide some or all of their property functions in a different way, such as taking services back in-house or possibly entering into new shared services agreements.

There was a discussion regarding the appropriate level of Member

involvement in any subsequent decision but in view of the likely time constraints, it was agreed that delegation to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with Members, was the only practical way forward.

**RESOLVED that the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Group Leaders, be given delegated authority to determine the future arrangements for the delivery of the Authority's property function including entering into any shared service or outsourced arrangement as appropriate.**

The Meeting ended at: 12:08

Signed:..... Date:.....

Chairman