

22 June 2011



Minutes

Members present:

Mr. D Prodger MBE (Chair), Brigadier P Jones CBE

Mr. T Bean, Mr. B Bullock, Mrs. M Bunker, Mr. J Campion, Mrs. L Duffy, Mrs. L Eyre, Mr. A Hardman, Mrs. L Hodgson, Mrs. G Hopkins, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes, Mr. B Matthews, Mrs. F Oborski, Mrs. J Potter, Mr. C Smith, Mr. T Spencer Mr. D Taylor, Mr. K Taylor, Mr. J Thomas, Mr. R Udall and Mr. G Yarranton.

No. Item

1. Apologies for Absence

The meeting noted the apologies from Mr. P Watts and Mr. J Cairns.

2. Declaration of Interests (if any)

The Chairman invited any Member or Officer to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda. Mr. P Jones, CBE, declared that his wife's son was a firefighter at Bromsgrove Fire Station.

3. Chairman's Announcements

3.1 Thanks to former Members of the Authority

The Chair said that he had written to Mrs P Andrews, Mr S Clee and Mr J Goodwin for their service to the Authority.

3.2 Welcome to new Members

The Chair welcomed Mr B Bullock (Worcestershire County Council), Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes and Mr B Matthews (both Herefordshire Council) to the Authority.

4. Election of Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations for the election of Chair to the Authority and as Mr D Prodger MBE, was the only nomination he was declared elected as Chairman.

The outgoing Chairman, Brigadier Peter Jones CBE, paid tribute to the Chief Fire Officer, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and his Member colleagues for their support during his time as Chairman of the Authority. He and the other Members, along with the Officers in attendance, also congratulated Mr D Prodger MBE on his election as Chairman and wished him well in the role.

5. Election of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations for the election of Vice-Chair to the Authority and as Brigadier Peter Jones CBE, was the only nomination he was declared elected as Vice-Chairman.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: *That the minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 16 February 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.*

7. Questions from Members of the Public

No questions for the Authority were received from members of the public.

8. Allocation of Seats to Political Groups, Appointments to Committees and Minor Amendments to Terms of Reference

The Clerk told the Authority that Standing Orders required that the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees normally be appointed at the annual meeting and that the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 required that where “a Council” holds an Annual Meeting it shall review the allocation of seats to political groups either at that meeting or as soon as practical thereafter. It was also appropriate to review the allocation of seats to political groups as the nominations from Herefordshire Council, following the recent Council elections, had resulted in changes to the political balance in the Authority.

The meeting considered the report and

Resolved:

- i) To make appointments to the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority’s Committees as follows:***

(a) Policy and Resources Committee:

Chair: Mr Kit Taylor; Vice Chair: Mr Gordon Yarranton;

(b) Audit Committee:

Chair: Mrs Lynne Duffy; Vice-Chair: Mrs Lucy Hodgson;

(c) Appointments Committee:

Chair: Mr Derek Prodger MBE; Vice-Chair: Mr Peter Jones CBE

- ii) To appoint Mrs Gay Hopkins and Mr David Greenow to represent the Authority on the Standards Committee and to appoint Mr John Thomas and Mr Terry Spencer as their named substitutes;***

- iii) To appoint Member Champions as follows:***

Asset Management: Mrs Liz Eyre;

Equality & Diversity: Mr Richard Udall; and

Risk Management: Mr Peter Watts

- iv) To appoint one representative from each political group as a Member Development Champion and appointed Mrs Lucy Hodgson, Mr David Taylor and Mr Clive Smith;***
- v) That the Clerk be authorised, following consultation with Group Leaders, to take any necessary action to give effect to proportionality requirements, determine the numbers of seats on Committees and make appointments to those Committees and other bodies in accordance with the wishes of the Group Leaders;***
- vi) That the Authority's representatives on the Local Government Association should be the Group Leaders or their nominees;***
- vii) That the 13 Service votes on the Local Government Association Assembly be allocated between its representatives on a politically proportionate basis;***
- viii) That the corporate vote on the Local Government Association Assembly be exercised by the Chairman or his nominee;***
- ix) That the Chairman or his nominee hold the place and vote available to the Authority on the LGA's Fire Commission;***
- x) To appoint the Chair of the Authority to the Worcestershire Partnership Board;***
- xi) To appoint the Vice-Chair of the Authority to the Herefordshire Partnership Board;***
- xii) To amend the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee to include a responsibility to "consider proposals of government departments and other national or regional bodies which would affect the role of the Audit Committee and approve responses to such proposals where possible"; and***
- xiii) To amend the Terms of Reference of the Appointments Committee so that the constitution of the Appointments Committee and Sub-Committee would include the Authority Chair, the Policy & Resources Committee Chair and the Audit Committee Chair.***

9. Members' Allowances Scheme

The Members considered a report from the Treasurer which stated that under the current Scheme of Members' Allowances agreed by the Authority their allowances were due to increase by 4.05% from 1 April 2011. The Members, apart from one abstention, were of the view that it would not be appropriate to increase allowances at that time.

RESOLVED that the level of Members' Allowances applicable from 1 April 2010 is retained for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

10. The Chief Fire Officer's Service Report

At the outset of his Service Report the Chief Fire Officer congratulated Mr Prodger MBE on his election as Chairman and thanked the outgoing Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Committees for their work with the Service.

The CFO updated the Authority on recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 January 2011 to 31 March 2011. He drew Members' attention to the following points:

- 10.1** The performance information for Quarter 4 2010/11 and for the entire year had been considered in detail by the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 June. The performance indicators for the year showed some of the best results the Service had ever achieved and he thanked the staff involved in those achievements.
- 10.2** The CFO expressed concern, shared by the Members, at the growing incidences of verbal abuse towards firefighters when dealing with fires.
- 10.3** The CFO drew Members' attention to the increased training in Health and Safety for firefighters.
- 10.4** Members noted the charging policy which would "go live" from 1 July 2011.
- 10.5** Members noted the CFO's award of the Authority's Outstanding Service Medal to firefighter Jason Mayhew and the commendations for Station Commander David Holland, Watch Commander Julian Jenkins and the 282 crew at Evesham fire station following a tragic incident at Boat Lane, Evesham, in February 2010.

The meeting agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would explore the possibility of a national award in recognition of the bravery, courage and skill displayed in this incident.
- 10.6** The CFO told the meeting of the Passing Out Parade of the Young Firefighters' Association on 21 May. He thanked all those who gave their time and expertise voluntarily to make the Association such a success and thanked the Authority for its continued support.
- 10.7** Members thanked the Service and praised the skills and professionalism of the firefighters at the fire in the fifth floor flat at St. Clements, Worcester and the scrap yard at Hereford.
- 10.8** In response to queries from Members, the CFO told the meeting that:
 - The policy regarding responding to AFAs was under review;
 - The Service had never, to the best of his knowledge, treated a call as a hoax, which later transpired to be a genuine call for assistance; and
 - The Community Fire Safety teams target schools and year 5 pupils in particular and over 800 children visited the Service's display at the Three Counties Show on Children's Day;

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

11. Provisional Financial Results 2010/11

The Treasurer briefed the Authority on financial results for the year ended 31 March 2011. He told the meeting that the provisional results, subject to audit, showed an underspend on revenue of £1.04m and on capital of £0.676M.

The Treasurer told the Authority that he would sign the Statement of Accounts for audit by 30 June and that the audited accounts would be considered in detail by the Audit Committee before approval by the Committee on 28 September.

RESOLVED that the Authority

- i) Notes the provisional financial results for 2010/11;*
- ii) Approves the re-phasing of capital expenditure of £0.676M from 2010/11 to 2011/12;*
- iii) Approves the use of revenue resources as follows:*

	<i>£m</i>
<i>Development Reserve</i>	<i>0.550</i>
<i>Operational Activity Reserve</i>	<i>0.300</i>
<i>General Reserve</i>	<i>0.190</i>
	<i>1.040</i>

- iv) Notes that the Audit Committee will consider the annual Statement of Accounts in detail.*

12. The Authority's Annual Plan 2011/12

The Director of Service Delivery presented the draft Authority Annual Plan 2011/12 for consideration by the Authority.

He highlighted the following items in the draft:

- The future outlook to 2015;
- The key achievements in 2010/11, including the work of volunteers and the Young Firefighters' Association and the reduction in working days lost to staff sickness;
- The Service priorities and objectives;
- The description of the area covered by the Service; and
- Financial information.

Resolved that the Authority adopts the draft Authority Annual Plan 2011/12 and approves for publication.

13. Annual Report from the Standards Committee to the Fire and Rescue Authority

The Chairman invited Mr Richard Gething, the independent Chair of the Standards Committee, to present the Committee's Annual Report to the Authority.

Mr Gething informed the meeting that:

- i. The Authority had not received any complaints against any Member of the Authority alleging breach of the Code of Conduct during the past 12 months;
- ii. The Committee had considered the Government's proposals to abolish the Standards for England regime and repeal current Code of Conduct legislation and the Annual report recommended proposals to the Authority to address those matters;
- iii. The Standards Committee thanked the Authority for the opportunity to review the revised Committee structure proposals and comment on same; and
- iv. The Committee had granted dispensations to all Members of the Authority until 31 March 2012 to allow them to be involved in the consideration of matters concerning the out-going Chief Fire Officer, the Authority and Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council.

RESOLVED

- i. That the Authority adopt a voluntary Code of Conduct for Members when the current Standards regime expires;*
- ii. That the voluntary Code should mirror the current Code, save where amendments are required arising from the provisions of the Localism Act;*
- iii. That the Authority have regard to the response of the constituent bodies when dealing with this matter;*
- iv. That Members continue to receive appropriate training in standards and ethics; and*
- v. That the Authority note the Committee's Annual Report to the Authority.*

14. Report from the Policy and Resources Committee

Mr Adrian Hardman, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, presented the report to the Authority of the proceedings of the Committee Meetings held on 24 March and 8 June 2011.

The main business carried out by the Committee included:

- i. Consideration of performance analysis for quarters 3 and 4 of 2010/2011 and the annual performance report;
- ii. Future proposals for the Service's Fire Control arrangements, including collaboration with Shropshire and Wrekin FRA. The Committee noted that the contract for the new command and control room in HQ had been awarded and that the Service has sought funding from Government to progress collaborative arrangements with Shropshire Fire and Rescue to develop a shared resilient control room infrastructure.
- iii. The Committee approved the Asset Management Strategy incorporating the indicative budget allocations for each of the capital building schemes, including five fire stations and four strategic training

facilities in March and, arising from same, approved the budget allocation for the capital building scheme to re-provide Malvern Fire Station in June.

RESOLVED *that the report be noted.*

15. Report from the Audit Committee

Mr Derek Prodger MBE, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the report to the Authority of the proceedings of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 April, which considered updates on internal Audit and the National Fraud Initiative and noted the changes introduced by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2011.

RESOLVED *that the report be noted.*

The meeting finished at 11.55 am

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____