



## Minutes

### **Members present:**

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

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

### **No. Item**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: B Matthews, C Smith and P Watts.

#### **2. Declaration of Interests**

The Chairman invited any Member to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda. No declarations of interest were made.

#### **3. Chairman's Announcements**

##### **Major Service Exercise**

The Chairman announced that on 17 and 18 March 2012 a major exercise would be conducted at the Fire Service College in Moreton in Marsh. Members were invited to attend the exercise on Saturday 17 March 2012 to observe this major training scenario which would provide a valuable insight into operational response to incidents of such a scale. Further details were available on request from Committee Services or the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

#### **4. Confirmation of Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 14 December 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:**

**Item 10, 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph to be amended to read ... "With regard to recommendation 6, attendance at hospitals ..."**

#### **5. Questions from Members of the Public**

No questions for the Authority had been received from members of the public.

## **6 Appointment of Treasurer (Section 151 Officer)**

A report was considered that asked the Authority to approve the appointment to the post of Treasurer (Section 151 Officer) as recommended by the Appointments Committee.

Once the appointment had been ratified by Members, the Chairman paid tribute to the outgoing Treasurer, Mr Tony Wood who had worked in various capacities for the Authority for eight and a half years. The Chief Fire Officer also paid tribute to Mr Wood on behalf of Officers. He commented that Mr Wood had helped the Authority in various capacities including as interim Director of Finance. He thanked him for his help and support and wished him well in the future.

Mr Wood responded by thanking Members and Officers for their tributes. He commented that the Authority had been dear to his heart and he hoped that it would successfully come through the current period of austerity.

*Councillor M Lloyd-Hayes arrived at the meeting at this point (10.40 am)*

***RESOLVED: that the Fire and Rescue Authority approve the appointment of Mr Martin Reohorn, Director of Finance and Assets as Treasurer to the Authority (Section 151 Officer).***

## **7. Chief Fire Officer's Service Report**

A report was considered that informed the Authority of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011.

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report and highlighted the following:

- There had been a decrease in incident numbers and this could be attributed to the unseasonably warm weather which had also resulted in less chimney fires.
- Secondary fires had increased by 57.8% during the quarter.
- Special services incidents had decreased largely due to the reduction in the number of flooding incidents.
- The number of road traffic incidents had remained the same.
- The number of false alarms had decreased.
- There had been an increase in the potential exposure of firefighters to contaminants. The Chief Fire Officer reported that the manner in which these incidents were recorded would be reviewed.

***RESOLVED: that the report be noted.***

## **8. Budget and Precept 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

A report was considered that requested the Authority to:

- i) determine the Revenue and Capital Budgets and the Council Tax requirement for 2012/13;
- ii) approve the Prudential Indicators and to set a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2012/13; and

- iii) identify potential future resources, their consequential impact on future year budgets and the future Council Tax requirement.

The Treasurer presented the report and highlighted the key items for Members' attention.

Members were advised that the Localism Act 2011 had changed the nature of the way the budget was now set. The Policy and Resources Committee had considered a paper on the budget in December 2011 and a Workshop had been held for Members where the budget had been widely debated. The key issue for the Authority was whether it would or would not accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant. The Policy and Resources Committee had recommended in January 2012 that the grant be accepted.

Members deliberated the proposals contained within the report and a lively debate ensued.

***RESOLVED that the Authority:***

- i) approves the Capital Budget and Programme as set out in Appendix 6 of the report to the Authority;***
- ii) approves the Statement of Prudential Code Indicators as set out in Appendix 9 of the report to the Authority;***
- iii) approves the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2012/13 as set out in Appendix 10 of the report to the Authority;***
- iv) approves the Revenue Budget as set out in Appendices 1 and 4 of the report to the Authority;***
- v) approves the Council Tax Requirement as set out in Appendix 7 of the report to the Authority; and***
- vi) notes the Medium Term Financial Forecast as set out in Appendix 8 of the report to the Authority.***

**9. Pay Policy Statement**

A report was considered that brought to the attention of the Authority the requirement for the Service to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement.

The Clerk advised Members that the Localism Act 2011 required an Authority to adopt a Pay Policy which was to be published on the Authority's website each financial year commencing 2012/13. Within the Pay Policy was a requirement to set out the remuneration of the Authority's senior staff, chief officers and lowest paid employees. In the future the full Authority was also required to consider payment of salaries over £100,000 and thus have the opportunity to vote before large salary packages were offered in respect of a new appointment. The principle of having a Pay Policy Statement was to ensure that it was accessible for citizens and enabled local taxpayers to make an informed view of whether local decisions on all aspects of remuneration were fair and made the best use of public funds.

The Clerk suggested that an additional recommendation be made with regard to delegating the completion of details of the salaries for the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) that the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Pay Policy Statement and supporting information be approved for publication on the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's website before 1 April 2012; and**
- ii) that delegated authority be given to the Chief Fire Officer to complete details in relation to the Treasurer's and Monitoring Officer's salaries as and when appointments are made to these posts.**

**10. Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan – Action Plan 2012/13**

A report was considered that requested that the Authority approve the proposed IRMP Action Plan 2012/13.

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report on behalf of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee. The background to the Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan was reiterated. Members were advised that the Action Plan 2009/12 had expired. Currently a National Framework was being consulted on and in the absence of an adopted National Framework it had been considered pertinent to adopt a further one year Action Plan which would remain in place until the new National Framework was agreed.

**RESOLVED that the following recommendations as contained in the proposed 2012/13 IRMP Action Plan be approved:**

- i) during 2012/13 we will deliver the outcomes of the 2011/12 review of Community Safety, which sought to identify methods for targeting the Service's resources more effectively in this area;**
- ii) during 2012/13 we will implement the agreed changes that result from the review of the current operational training strategy and provision;**
- iii) the 2011/12 IRMP Action Plan identified specific elements of fire cover within the Service including resources, which would be reviewed in 2011/12. In 2012/13 we will review fire cover across the remainder of the Service;**
- iv) we will continue to develop further opportunities to consolidate our collaboration with Shropshire and Wrekin Fire & Rescue Authority; and**
- v) we will review the provision of road traffic collision equipment across the Service and seek to implement any appropriate changes in order to improve the service we provide to the community.**

**11. Clarification of Officers' Delegation Scheme and Amendments to the Policy and Resources Committee's Terms of Reference**

A report was considered that sought agreement to amend an element of the Officers' Delegation Scheme and refresh certain monetary levels. The report also sought to amend the Terms of Reference of the Policy and Resources

Committee to support the proposed amendments to the Officers' Delegation Scheme. The Clerk presented the report and highlighted the key changes that were proposed.

Councillor Eyre suggested an additional recommendation that the Committee should receive a report on an annual basis that detailed any claims that had been made and the subsequent costs in order that the Authority could review whether the Scheme of Delegation was sufficient.

***RESOLVED that the wording in the Officers' Delegation Scheme be amended as follows:***

- i) paragraph 5.1 of the Scheme of Delegation be amended as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report to the Authority;***
- ii) paragraphs 3.6 and 5.4 of the Scheme of Delegation be amended as detailed in paragraph 10 of the report to the Authority;***
- iii) the Terms of Reference of the Policy and Resources Committee be amended as detailed in paragraph 7 and 12 of the report to the Authority; and***
- iv) a report be made to the Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis that details any decisions with regard to claims that have been made and any subsequent costs so that the Authority can review whether the Scheme of Delegation in this regard is sufficient.***

## **12. Standards Report**

A report was considered that informed the Authority of the proceedings of the Standards Committee meeting held on 8 February 2012 and asked the Authority to consider recommendations put forward by the Standards Committee in relation to proposed changes to the standards regime under the Localism Act 2011.

The Clerk presented the report and drew Members' attention to the key changes to the Standards regime. Members were advised that there were areas of the Localism Act 2011 that required further clarification from the Government namely the appointment of independent members and whether the Authority's current independent members were eligible to continue in their role under the new arrangements and details regarding the registration of gifts and hospitality.

The Chairman of the Standards Committee informed Members that the changes to the Standards Regime were required to be in place by 1 July 2012 and a further report would be made to the June 2012 meeting of the Authority. However, it was necessary for the Authority to have in place arrangements for dealing with breaches of the Code when the current regime finished. The Standards Committee had discussed at some length the best way forward for the Authority and perceived that a Standards Panel would promote transparency and rebut any allegation of self-regulation. The possibility of the Audit Committee taking on the remit of the Standards Committee had also been discussed by the Standards Committee but had been dismissed.

The Authority was required to appoint at least one independent member to assist with the investigation of complaints but the Standards Committee had perceived that the appointment of at least three independent members was more pertinent.

Under the Localism Act 2011 three options were open to the Authority with regard to the Code of Conduct:

1. It could amend its current Code.
2. Adopt a new model Code currently being developed by ACSes and the LGA.
3. It could develop its own model.

Members discussed the proposals contained within the report and were in agreement that there should be a common code that was applicable to all Authorities in Hereford and Worcestershire in order to achieve harmonisation.

***RESOLVED that the Authority:***

- i) authorises the Clerk to liaise with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Councils and in consultation with the Standards Committee to develop a common Code of Conduct for approval by the Authority on 20 June 2012;***
- ii) agrees in principle to appoint a Standards Panel and authorises the Clerk to prepare the relevant draft terms of reference and a framework for addressing future Code of Conduct complaints and any necessary investigations for consideration at the Authority meeting on 20 June 2012; and***
- iii) authorises the Clerk to commence the appointments process of a minimum of three independent members for resolving allegations of breaches of the new Code of Conduct; and***
- iv) agrees to extend its current standards regime until the commencement of the new regime under the Localism Act 2011.***

### **13. Policy and Resources Committee Report**

A report was considered that informed the Authority of the proceedings of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 25 January 2012.

***RESOLVED that the report be noted.***

### **14. Audit Committee Report**

A report was considered that informed the Authority of the proceedings of the Audit Committee meeting held on 18 January 2012.

***RESOLVED that the report be noted.***

**15. Appointments Committee**

A report was considered that outlined the proceedings of the Appointments Committee held on 25 January 2012.

***RESOLVED that the report be noted.***

The meeting finished at 12.18 pm

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

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