



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 Campion, Mrs L Duffy, Mrs L Eyre, Mr A Hardman, Mrs L Hodgson, Mrs G Hopkins, Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes, Mrs F Oborski, Mrs J Potter, Mr T Spencer, Mr K Taylor, Mr J Thomas, Mr R Udall, Mr P Watts, Mr T Wells and Mr. G Yarranton.

No. Item

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Cairns, Mr D Greenow, Mr B Matthews and Mr D Taylor.

2. Declaration of Interests (if any)

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Chairman's Announcements

3.1 Thank You

As this was the last meeting of the full Authority before the Worcestershire County Council elections in May, the Chairman thanked Members who would not be standing again on behalf of the Authority for all their years of Service and wished them all the best in the future. He also thanked all Members for the dedicated work and support they had given personally to him as Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

3.2 Local Government Association Fire Conference

The Chairman reported that he and other Group Leaders would be accompanying the Chief Fire Officer to represent the Authority at the Local Government Association Fire Conference in Brighton on 12 and 13 March 2013.

3.3 Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire

Members were advised that the new Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Holcroft OBE would be visiting the Service on Monday 25 March hosted by the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman would be meeting him at Service Headquarters for lunch.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes noted that her apologies had not been received and entered on the minutes.

RESOLVED: *That the minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 12 December 2012 be confirmed as a correct*

record and signed by the Chairman subject to the addition of Mrs M Lloyd-Hayes' name being included on the list of apologies.

5. Questions from Members of the Public

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

6. 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 2012 to 31 December 2012.

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report and responded to Members' questions as follows:

- A Member complimented the Chief Fire Officer on the way that the Lawrence's Recycling Plant fire was handled. It was queried whether the Authority could be compensated for such events. The Chief Fire Officer responded that the Service had a statutory duty to attend fires and a decision had been taken to attend the fire from 12 December 2012 until 11 January 2013. He commented that if any clean up was required at a hazardous material incident following the emergency resolution phase the Service has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place with the Environment Agency for cost recovery. This was a fire incident and the crews were in attendance only during the extensive emergency phase.
- It was noted by a Member that 18 fire engines would be used during Exercise Cerberus and it was queried how the Service would cope if any incidents occurred during the duration of the exercise. The Chief Fire Officer reassured Members that fire engines would leave the exercise if it proved necessary and also the exercise was also designed to test the Service's resilience during a large scale deployment.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Budget and Precept 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Treasurer presented the report to Members. He advised Members that further information about the grant settlement had been forthcoming and also more information on the share of the cost of Council Tax Benefit. However he commented that this new information had not substantially changed the financial position of the Authority. He drew Members' attention to the budget gap which had been discussed at the Finance Seminar on 16 January where ways to address the gaps had been discussed. He also drew Members' attention to budget risks.

A debate then ensued by Members on the merits of taking the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Authority accepts the Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2013/14.**

- (ii) that the Capital Budget and Programme as set out in Appendix 7 to report number FRA 029/12 be approved;
- (iii) the Statement of Prudential Code indicators set out in Appendix 10 to report number FRA 029/12 be approved;
- (iv) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix 11 to report number FRA 029/12 be approved;
- (v) the Revenue Budget as set out in Appendices 2 and 5 of report number FRA 029/12 be approved;
- (vi) the Council Tax Requirement as set out in Appendix 8 of report number FRA 029/12 be approved; and
- (vii) the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as set out in Appendix 9 of report number FRA 029/12 be noted.

8. Findings and Recommendations arising from the Operational Assessment 2012

A report was considered that informed Members of the outcome of the Operational Assessment (OpA) conducted in 2012.

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report and advised Members that Peer Reviews were not mandatory but were strongly encouraged. He commented that the findings of the report were pleasing.

Members commended the Chief Fire Officer on the report and were pleased to see that details of the Operational Assessment had been published in full as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED

- (i) the findings of the Operational Assessment be noted;
- (ii) the findings be incorporated within the Fire and Rescue Authority's Annual Statement of Assurance;
- (iii) a detailed Action Plan to address the report's findings be presented to the Audit Committee for approval and subsequent monitoring of implementation; and
- (iv) the Fire and Rescue Authority endorse the principle of further collaborative working with Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority and note that senior officers and the Chairman will be meeting with their counterparts to discuss how best to take this forward with a view to bringing back further recommendations.

9. Pay Policy Statement

A report was considered that brought to the attention of the Authority the requirement for the Service to publish its annual Pay Policy Statement for the year 2013/14.

RESOLVED 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 2013.

10. Committee Structure

A report was considered that sought approval to the principle of implementing a new constitution defining the role of the Authority, delegating greater responsibilities to committees and merging the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee.

The Head of Legal Services presented the report and reiterated that matters of strategic importance would be reserved for decision by the full Authority.

RESOLVED that approval be given to the adoption of a new constitution:

- (i) defining the matters of strategic importance that are reserved for decision by the full Authority;**
- (ii) delegating other matters within the remit of individual committees to those committees for decision; and**
- (iii) combining the present Audit Committee and Standards Committee into a single Audit and Standards Committee.**

11. Member Learning and Development Strategy

A report was considered that sought the Authority's approval of the Member Learning and Development Strategy.

A comprehensive induction programme would be arranged for both new and returning Members but the aim of the proposed Strategy was to continue to promote Member development throughout the next three year period.

A Member Development Champion spoke in favour of the Strategy. It was perceived to be vital that all Members were effective in their role as Members. Another Member commented on the poor attendance of Members at Member Development sessions.

It was noted that Group Leaders had an important role to play in ensuring Member commitment to delivery of the Strategy.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the draft Members' Learning and Development Strategy be approved; and**
- (ii) any further views on topics for inclusion be put forward to the Member Development Working Party.**

12. Report from the Policy and Resources Committee

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, Mr K Taylor, presented the report which informed the Authority of the proceedings of

the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 23 January 2013.

RESOLVED that the Authority note the proceedings of the Committee meeting held on 23 January 2013.

13. Report from Audit Committee

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Mrs L Duffy, presented the report which informed the Authority of the proceedings of the Audit Committee meeting held on 16 January 2013.

RESOLVED that the Authority note the proceedings of the Committee meeting held on 16 January 2013.

The meeting finished at 11.50 am.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date: _____