



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Thursday, 14 December 2017, 10:30

## Minutes

**Members Present:** Mr B A Baker, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr A Fry, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Dr C A Hotham, Mr J L V Kenyon, Mr R I Matthews, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr R J Phillips, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall, Mr S D Williams

### Also in Attendance

Mr J Campion - West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner

### 151 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Mr R Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre, Mr A Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs F Oborski and Mr K Pollock.

### 152 Declarations of Interest (if any)

No interests were declared.

### 153 Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority meeting held on 4th September 2017 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 154 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced that he had attended the following events:

- the Carol Service held at St John's Church in Claines, Worcester on 9th December 2017;
- the Fire Service Medals and Awards Ceremonies held in

- Worcester and Hereford;
- the Dying to Drive event for year 11 pupils held at Worcester Fire Station;
- the Fire Service Exercise at Sennybridge in Herefordshire;
- a briefing on the new Fire Inspectorate;
- the National Joint Council for Fire and Rescue Authorities; and
- the Annual Combined Fire Authorities Conference.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he had held several meetings with the Chief Fire Officer and senior officers, Group Leaders and together with the Vice Chairman had met the Chairman of Shropshire Fire Authority and the Portfolio Holder for Fire and Community Safety in Warwickshire.

The Chairman also announced that the Minister had appointed him as an employers' representative on the Fire Pension Scheme Advisory Board and he had attended his first meeting in December.

## **155 Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

## **156 PCC Business Case**

The Chairman reminded Members that the PCC had submitted a revised business case on fire governance directly to the Home Office which was currently being reviewed by CIPFA on behalf of the Secretary of State.

The Chairman explained that the Leaders of the Constituent Authorities had again requested the two Fire Authorities to engage consultants to undertake an independent analysis of the business case due to concerns regarding the potential impact on the delivery of fire and rescue services. The outcome of this analysis carried out by Ameo Alendi Consulting Ltd, which had been circulated with the agenda papers had been submitted to CIPFA for their consideration.

The PCC informed the meeting that a report back to the Home Office from CIPFA was likely by 8th January 2018 and explained that the revised business case proposed an alliance between the two fire and rescues services rather than a merger.

Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions with regards to the issues set out in the revised business case.

**RESOLVED that the report "Assessment of the West Mercia PCC Final Business Case" by Ameo Alendi Consulting Ltd be noted**

**and sent to the constituent authorities and to local MPs.**

**157 Revision to Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Treasurer informed Members that key funding information for 2018/19 was due to be received from Government by 21st December, however it was not expected that this would differ significantly from the four year settlement previously announced. The Treasurer advised that the position after 2019/20 was less clear and as a precaution the MTFP assumed that the grant (or equivalent) was 10% lower in 2020/21 than in 2019/20 and a further 10% lower in 2021/22.

Following questions from Members, the Treasurer confirmed the general reserve of £1.538m was adequate for the needs of the Authority and that the total value of reserves was in the region of £12m.

**RESOLVED that the current resources position be noted and a further report be brought to the Policy & Resources Committee when the key funding information has been made available.**

**158 Principal Officer Temporary Structure Proposal**

[The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.]

The Chairman informed the meeting that the DCFO had tendered his resignation with a view to retire in July 2018. The Chairman thanked the DCFO for providing the Authority with sufficient notice of his intended departure to allow ample time for future arrangements to be reviewed and implemented.

The Chief Fire Officer presented a proposal to delay the permanent appointment of a DCFO, but instead to make temporary appointments to the DCFO and ACFO posts in light of the uncertainty arising from the submission of the PCC's business case on fire governance.

The PCC and Authority Members thanked the DCFO for his hard work, commitment and leadership which was not only highly regarded throughout the Authority but also amongst partner organisations.

***RESOLVED that with effect from the date of retirement of the DCFO (or as agreed by the CFO):***

***i) the current Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) be temporarily promoted to the post of DCFO for a period of at least 12 months***

*(with an option to review and extend depending on prevailing circumstances) and that the resultant temporary vacancy at Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) be filled internally - potentially using a number of candidates; and*

*ii) the remuneration level of the temporary DCFO & ACFO posts will be the same as the substantive DCFO & ACFO posts respectively, albeit that the positions will not attract any pensionable benefit (due to the temporary nature of the position).*

## **159 Houses of Multiple Occupation: Project Update**

The Area Commander for Community Risk and Training provided an update on the twelve month project targeting fire safety in houses of multiple occupation and residential accommodation above commercial premises. As a direct consequence of the project there had been a significant increase in fire safety enforcement action meaning that the risk of harm or injury from fire had been considerably reduced by the project.

Members commended the report and the work undertaken by the project team and it was suggested that the project and its positive outcomes should be publicised.

### **RESOLVED that:**

**i) the success of the project to date be noted and proactively publicised:**

- **an additional 526 business fire safety checks have been completed, resulting in enforcement action being taken against 91 premises; and**
- **358 residents are now living in safer conditions where the risk of harm or injury from fire has been considerably reduced.**

**ii) the continuation of the project for a further 12 months at a cost of circa £73,000, to be met from the Organisational Development Reserve be approved.**

## **160 Chief Fire Officer's Report**

[Cllr A Fry left the meeting at 11:50am]

The Chief Fire Officer gave Members a presentation on the following key developments and activities:

- Service Exercise Assemble held at Sennybridge in Herefordshire

organised by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) provided the emergency services with a real life scenario in which to practice their skills and partnership working;

- the National Breathing Apparatus Challenge saw the team from Broadway and Worcester RDS (on-call firefighters) placed in the silver category;
- Annual Awards Ceremonies were held in Worcester and Hereford to celebrate the achievements of staff, volunteers and young firefighters
- the Dementia Pledge recently made by HWFRS, Shropshire FRS, West Midlands Ambulance Service and West Mercia Police had shown public commitment to being dementia friendly organisations;
- Dying to Drive road safety events organised by HWFRS were attended by over 3000 year 11 pupils from across the two counties;
- a Water Safety Pilot developed by the University of Worcester in conjunction with HWFRS and the Royal Lifesaving Society was recently attended by year 6 pupils from Northwick Primary School in Worcester;
- the new Operational Command Centre at Hindlip recently named Southwell House was nearing completion with HWFRS Fire Control due to move in between February and March 2018; and
- the recent recruitment campaign for wholetime firefighters had led to 994 viable applications being received with 27 applicants passing the selection process and 18 recruits due to commence training in 2018.

The Chief Fire Officer also updated Members on the operational activity that had taken place during the recent heavy snow conditions. Members were informed that the investment previously made by the Authority in appropriate fleet and equipment had not only ensured HWRS attendance at incidents during the snow but had also assisted in the transportation of Fire Control staff and front line healthcare staff.

#### **161 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee**

Cllr I. Hardiman, a Committee Member reported the proceedings of the Audit & Standards Committee held on 6th September 2017.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2017 be received and noted.**

#### **162 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee**

The Committee Chairman reported the proceedings of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 20th September 2017 and 22nd November 2017.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meetings held on 20th September 2017 and 22nd November 2017 be received and noted.**

**163 Minutes of the Appointments Committee**

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee reported the proceedings of the Appointments Committee held on 22nd November 2017.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Appointments Committee meeting held on 22nd November 2017 be received and noted.**

The Meeting ended at: 12:10

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman