

Please note that these minutes will remain as a draft until formally confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting and signed by the Chairman.

2.00 pm Friday 26 June 2009

Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1JR



Members

Present:

Herefordshire:

Mrs P A Andrews, Mr J H R Goodwin, Mr D Greenow,
Brigadier P Jones CBE (Chair), Mr D C Taylor, Mr P J Watts.

Worcestershire:

Mr T Bean, Mr R. Bullock, Mr S Clee, Mr A Ditta, Mrs M Drinkwater,
Mrs L Duffy, Mrs E Eyre, Mr A Hardman, Mrs L Hodgson, Mrs G Hopkins,
Mrs F Oborski, Mrs J Potter, Mr C Smith, Mr T Spencer, Mr K Taylor,
Mr J Thomas, Mr R Udall, Mr G Yarranton.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr D Prodger MBE

2. Chairman's Announcements

2.1 Minute's Silence for Cllr. Jeremy Webb:

The Chairman invited all present to join with him in a Minute's silence to remember Mr. Jeremy Webb, who passed away since the last Authority Meeting.

2.2 Introduction of New Members:

The Chairman congratulated the Worcestershire Councillors who had been re-elected and returned to the Authority, and welcomed the newly appointed Members. He then gave each Member the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Meeting.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chairman thanked all those members who had not been returned, and requested that the Authority send them a letter of thanks for their service.

2.3 Annual Carol Service:

The Chairman announced that the Annual Carol Service would take place in Leominster Priory on 20 December 2009.

2.4 Members Visits to Stations:

Members had received a Schedule of pre-arranged visits to Stations, and Group Leaders would nominate members to visit each station. The Chairman encouraged members to attend, and emphasised the importance of the visits

2.5 Visit by Lady Darnley, Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire:

The Chairman announced that Lady Darnley would visit Service Headquarters on 4 August, and then visit Herefordshire Fire Station.

3. Declaration of Interests

Mr T Spencer declared an interest in the Young Firefighters' Association and Mr P Watts advised the Authority that if the Firefighters' Pension Scheme was discussed in such detail that it affected his personal position, he would declare a personal and prejudicial interest. (That proving not to be the case, there was no need for Mr Watts to leave the room during the Meeting.

4. To Elect a Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority

Resolved that Brigadier P Jones CBE be re-elected as Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

5. To Elect a Vice-Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority

Resolved that Mr S Clee be re-elected as Vice- Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing year.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

Resolved that: the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Urgent Decision Item – Appointment of Clerk/Monitoring Officer

In accordance with Section 100B 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), and paragraph 4.3.7(b) of the Authority's Standing orders for the Conduct of Business, the Chairman allowed consideration of a late item as a matter of urgency to ensure that the statutory role of Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority was filled.

A report was circulated at the meeting.

The Acting Clerk, Mr Geoff Hardy, told the meeting that Mr. Alan McLaughlin had recently left his position with Herefordshire Council, leaving a vacancy in the office of Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority, which it was necessary to fill to ensure that the Authority met its statutory requirements.

The Authority was recommended to appoint Ms. Charlotte Adan, the Interim Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic) at Herefordshire Council as Clerk/Monitoring Officer to the Authority with immediate effect to ensure that the statutory post was filled.

Resolved that Ms. Charlotte Adan be appointed as Clerk/ Monitoring Officer to the Authority.

8. Questions from Members of the Public

None.

9. Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies.

The Authority considered the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups and reviewed the appointments to other bodies.

Resolved that:

- i) **appointments be made to the offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority's Committees as follows:**

Appointments Committee

Chairman: Brigadier P Jones CBE

Audit Committee

Chairman: Mr D Prodger MBE

Vice-Chairman: Mrs L Duffy

Budget Committee

Chairman: Mr A I Hardman

Vice-Chairman: Mr T J Bean

Best Value Policy and Performance Committee

Chairman: Mrs M L Drinkwater

Vice-Chairman: Mr G Yarranton

Urgent Decisions

Chairman: Mr S J Clee

- ii) **Mr J Goodwin and Mrs G Hopkins be appointed to the Standards Committee and Group Leaders nominate named substitutes, in consultation with the Clerk;**
- iii) **the proposed appointments submitted by Group Leaders (as attached at appendix 1) be confirmed by the Authority, and that Group Leaders, in consultation with the Clerk nominate Members to any remaining vacancies. These nominations and other amendments to the membership of Committees to give effect to proportionality requirements;**

- iv) **it be confirmed that the Authority adhere to its previous view that representation and voting on the Local Government Association be as follows:**
 - a) **that the Authority's representatives on the Local Government Association should be the Group Leaders or their nominees;**
 - b) **that the 13 Service votes on the Local Government Association Assembly be allocated between its representatives on a politically proportionate basis; and**
 - c) **the corporate vote on the Local Government Association Assembly be exercised by the Chairman or his nominee;**
- v) **the Chairman or his nominee should hold the place and vote available to the Authority on the LGA's Fire Service Forum;**
- vi) **the Leader of the Conservative Group, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Leader of the Independent Group should be the Authority's appointments to the Regional Management Board; and**
- vii) **the Chairman of the Authority be appointed as a Director of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Company.**

10. The 2008/09 Annual Report of the Standards Committee

The Authority considered the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2008/09. The meeting discussed the concerns of the Committee regarding attendance by Members at Training Events, and, it was agreed to consider running some events in the evenings to facilitate Members who may have to work during the day.

The Chairman encouraged members to attend the Induction Training which the Authority would provide on 15 July, and recommended that all members should avail of the opportunity afterwards to visit the Service's Operational and Logistics Centre at Betony Road, Malvern.

Members were also encouraged to attend the session on Standards & Ethics that was scheduled for 3 November.

Resolved that :

- i) **the Annual Report be noted by the Authority;**
- ii) **the Fire & Rescue Authority notes the concerns of the Standards Committee at the low level of attendance by Members at Training Seminars, and the concerns raised for the Corporate Governance of the Authority;**

- iii) **the Fire & Rescue Authority and Group Leaders encourage Members to attend future training events; and**
- iv) **the Authority approves the addendum to the Committee's Terms of Reference, as follows:**

“Setting up an Assessment Sub-Committee or making arrangements with an adjoining Authority with regard to conducting assessments of complaints”

11. Service Report

The Chief Fire Officer reported on recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 January 2009 to 31 March 2009. The number of Health and Safety incidents/injuries had fallen sharply in comparison to the same quarter of 2008/09 and had halved in relation to the preceding quarter. The ACFO Service Support agreed to report back to Mr P Watts, in response to a question regarding the cause of Fleet Health and Safety accidents.

Members were updated on the plans that the Service had in place to deal with the current pandemic alert regarding Swine Flu. The planning arrangements were being led through the Local Resilience Forums, which comprised of representatives from the Service and other partners. Members were assured that the Service would strive to maintain optimum front line service delivery and, in the event of major staff shortages, priority would be given to safeguarding front line service to the public.

At the previous meeting, the cost of calling the Service on the main 0845 number for a mobile phone to put forward a complaint had been raised. Officers had since undertaken further research on the costs of 0845/0800 telephone numbers. Members discussed the use of an 0845 number for dealing with complaints, concerns and compliments from the public, and agreed that the telephone option which gave best value to the public should be employed, with emphasis on the costs of calls from mobile phones.

The Authority praised the Service for a job “remarkably well done” when dealing with the recent fire at the Skymark premises in Leominster. The Chairman commended the way the Service took command, and the sensible decisions made by the Officers involved.

Resolved that

- i) **the Report be noted; and**
- ii) **the Service considers the introduction of a telephone number for dealing with complaints, concerns and compliments that provides the public with best value when calling from a mobile phone.**

12. Financial Results 2008/09

The Treasurer presented the financial results for 2008/09. He apologised to Members for the late supply of the papers, and said that this would be improved upon in future.

He told the Meeting that he appreciated the complexities of the Service's finances, that training for Members had been arranged to deal with financial matters and that he was happy to arrange further seminars for Members, if necessary.

An amended version of the Statement of Accounts was circulated at the meeting, for Members' information. In summary, the Treasurer reported a strong financial performance, with General Reserves in excess of Central Government requirements.

Resolved that the Financial Results for 2008/09 be noted.

13. Flooding Update

The Chief Fire Officer informed the Authority that the Service had learned important lessons and gained invaluable experience from the flooding events of the past decade. The Service had now developed a Water Rescue Strategy which drew on this experience and had regard to the national response to flooding events.

The Strategy had identified gaps in the provision of these essential services, and recommended solutions which could be provided within current financial constraints by the reprioritisation of existing budgets.

Cllr. Eyre congratulated the Service on its response to the 2007 flooding events, and requested that further consideration be given to areas which suffered minor but more frequent flooding problems, and in this regard to utilise the local knowledge of retained officers and work with local partnerships.

Cllr Udall proposed that the Best Value Policy & Performance Committee should review the proposed Flood/Water Rescue Strategy in detail and report back to the Authority at its meeting on 18 December with any recommendations as appropriate.

Resolved that

- i) the Authority notes the current national and local position in respect of flooding/water rescue;**
- ii) the Authority approves the establishment of a cadre of Water Incident Managers and improved management and oversight for all specialist water/ flood capabilities;**

- iii) the Authority consults stakeholders through the IRMP process on whether to establish a minimum or optimum “first responder” capability. The ongoing revenue costs of either proposal would be met through back office efficiencies to be agreed through the same IRMP process; and
- iv) the Authority tasks the Chief Fire Officer with seeking external funding support for existing and “first responder” capabilities that are made available to the National Asset Register, being compiled by the Government’s Flood Rescue National Enhancement Programme (FRNE).
- v) the proposed Flood/Water Rescue Strategy be reviewed by the BVPP Committee.

14. Integrated Risk Management Plan – Draft 2010/2011 Action Plan Consultation

The Chief Fire Officer gave Members the background to Integrated Risk Management, and presented the various proposals in the draft 2010/2011 Plan for public consultation.

During the ensuing discussion on the revised Flood/Water Rescue Strategy, Cllr. Eyre pointed out that 4 parishes in the area had received funding of £5,000 each for flood response, and suggested that the Authority contact them regarding these funds.

The proposed improvements to strengthen the Service response to flooding events would need to be funded from back office efficiencies and it was acknowledged that continued back-office efficiencies could impact on front-line delivery.

Resolved that the Authority approves the Draft 2010-11 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan for consultation.

15. Service Plan 2009/10

The T/ACO for Planning, Policy and Performance presented the Service Plan 2009/10 for approval. He told the meeting that the Plan provided an overview of the Authority’s strategic objectives and priorities for 2009/10, and it also detailed the achievements of the Service in 2008/09.

Resolved that the Authority approves the 2009-10 Service Plan.

The meeting ended at 3.30 pm

Chairman.....

Appendix 1.

Committee	Total Seats	Conservative Group	Lib. Dem. Group	Independent Group plus 1 Labour
Group Leaders		Brigadier Jones (Ch) Stephen Clee (VC)	Tom Bean	D Taylor
Urgent Decisions	11	8 S Clee (C) M L Drinkwater A Hardman J Goodwin Liz Eyre P Watts L Hodgson K Taylor	2 P Andrews C Smith	1 J Thomas
Appointments Committee	11	8 S Clee L Duffy P Jones – Ch J Goodwin D Prodger M Drinkwater D Greenow G Yarranton	2 T Bean P Andrews	1 R Udall
Audit Committee	5	4 D Prodger – Ch G Hopkins L Duffy VC	1 C Smith	1 J Thomas
Best Value, Policy and Performance Committee	7	5 M Drinkwater - C G Yarranton VC J Goodwin L Duffy K Taylor	1 F Oborski	1 R Udall
Budget Committee	11	8 A Hardman – Ch J Goodwin J Potter Brig Jones D Prodger G Yarranton L Eyre L Hodgson	2 T Bean VC F Oborski	1 D Taylor

Standards Committee	<p>2 Councillors to be determined by the Authority on the recommendation of Group Leaders (and named deputies)</p> <p>and 5 Independent persons</p> <p>(The current Independent persons are Mr C Emeny, Mr R Gething, Dr M Mylechreest, Mr R Rogers and Mr D Stevens)</p> <p>Cllr Goodwin (Cons), G Hopkins (Cons)</p>
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