



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 25 April 2018 at Lecture Theatre - Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors D Beckett, M Biggin, D Flude, P Harris, E Johnson, N Jones, D Mahon, D Marren, J Mercer, K Mundry, S Nelson, S Parker, R Polhill, B Rudd, T Sherlock, M Simon, M Tarr, J Weatherill and S Wright.

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were recorded for Councillors D Bailey, A Dirir, G Merry, J Saunders and the Police and Crime Commissioner David Keane.

C Chair's Announcements

The Chair asked Members to note the content of the Chair's announcements, which included details of the Authority's achievements and events that Members had attended since the last Fire Authority meeting in February 2018. He drew Members attention to the Working Together award which was the fourth award in a year that the Service had won for the Safe and Well programme.

The Chair also spoke about the Chief Fire Officer's recent announcement that he was retiring from the Service at the end of June. He thanked the Chief for his strong leadership over the last 9 years particularly how he had implemented plans to maintain the number of fire engines, increase the number of fire stations and continue to drive the prevention agenda despite the austerity measures that had been imposed.

The Deputy Chair also paid tribute to the Chief for his commitment to his role to ensure the safety of the people in Cheshire and also, on a personal note, for the role he played in the Deputy Chair's personal development.

The deputy group spokesperson for the Conservative group commented that the Chief was a very well respected leader amongst Members and officers and wished him a happy, well deserved retirement.

D Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' Interests.

E Minutes of Fire Authority

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 14th February 2018 be approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

That the word 'remains' in Item 7 Resolution No 2 be replaced with the words 'should be' as detailed elsewhere in the minutes in relation to the alternative motion proposed for the duty system at Crewe Fire Station.

F Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions submitted from members of the Public.

G Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee meeting held on 28th February 2018 be received, for information.

H Minutes of Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee meeting held on 11th April 2018 be received, for information.

I Minutes of Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee meeting held on 28th March 2018 be received, for information.

J Minutes of Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 7th March 2018 be received, for information.

K Notes of the Member Training and Development Group

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Member Training and Development Group meeting held on 9th April 2018 be received, for information.

L Programme of Member Meetings 2018-19

RESOLVED:

That the revised programme of meetings for 2018-19 be approved.

2 CHANGES TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY'S CONSTITUTION

The Director of Governance and Commissioning presented this report, which provided details of recommendations to the Fire Authority from Governance and Constitution Committee on proposed changes to the Fire Authority's Constitution following the Committee review of elements of the Constitution.

A. Members Code of Conduct

The Governance and Constitution Committee had reviewed the current Members Code of Conduct with a view to simplifying the wording of the code and making aspects of the code clearer. The main changes proposed were highlighted and a copy of the revised code was attached to the report.

Members were supportive of the changes and agreed that it would be useful for all Members to sign a declaration to say that they agreed to abide by the code.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning confirmed that the changes would take effect immediately.

B. Procedure for Handling Complaints

The Governance and Constitution Committee had assisted officers in the production of a new version of the procedure for handling complaints which was attached to the report, for information.

The report of the Head of Governance and Commissioning also clarified the membership of the Members' Code of Conduct Sub-Committee which would, wherever possible, include two Members from each of the two main political groups. This would be highlighted in the Committee appointments report in June.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning confirmed that the changes would take effect immediately.

C. Review of Arrangements for Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee and Staffing Committee

The Governance and Constitution Committee proposed revisions to the responsibilities of these two committees to provide more clarity. A copy of the report considered by the Committee and the revised responsibilities was attached to the report.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning explained that, if approved, it was proposed that the new arrangement would be brought into effect for the

commencement of the 2018-19 municipal year.

Members were satisfied with the proposals and the cross party work of the Governance and Constitution Committee on these recommendations was noted.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the adoption of the Members' Code of Conduct (attached as 2A to the report) be approved;**
- [2] the changes to the procedure for handling complaints be noted; and**
- [3] the updated responsibilities of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee and Staffing Committee (attached to the report as 2C) be approved.**

3 RECRUITMENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced this report which confirmed the arrangements for the recruitment process for the role of Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive (CFOCE).

It was noted that there would be an opportunity for all Members to meet with the candidates for a buffet lunch on 16th May and that the Chair had agreed to call an additional meeting of the Fire Authority on 22nd May to make the final decision on the appointment.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the arrangements for the recruitment of a Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive be noted.**

4 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT (NON-ELECTED) MEMBER

The Director of Governance and Commissioning presented the report which sought Member approval for the appointment of an independent (non-elected) member. He explained that the Member interview panel (comprising of members of the Governance and Constitution Committee) had interviewed two candidates on 11th April 2018 and also provided a brief resume of the preferred candidate.

The Chair of the Governance and Constitution Committee added that both candidates were of a high standard and it had been a difficult decision but the panel recommended the appointment of Mr Barnett to the Authority.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] Derek Alan Barnett be appointed as an Independent (non-elected) Member for a term of office of four years.**

5 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN FOR 2017-18

The Treasurer introduced Andrew Smith and Ged Small from Grant Thornton (the External Auditor), who were in attendance at the meeting to present the External Audit Plan (the Plan) for 2017-18.

The External Auditor provided an overview of the Plan. The Plan explained the criteria used to help arrive at the Auditor's value for money conclusion and the audit fee for the work for 2017-18. It also stated that the External Audit Plan fee for 2017-18 would be £29,860 and it was noted that this was unchanged from last year.

A Member raised a query on whether any audit work took place in respect of salaries not being paid to an individual but to an associated account. The External Auditor explained that they did analyse the payroll accounts and would look in more detail if the payments were made off payroll (by invoice). The Treasurer added that he would look into the query on the identification of salaries being paid into associate bank accounts. A query on whether the audit on operating expenses would include corporate credit card transactions was also raised and the External Auditor confirmed that as the audit was carried out on a sample basis this could include credit card transactions. Finally the Member queried if the audit on the Firefighters Pension Scheme in response to the identification of this as a risk was carried out on an annual basis and the Auditor confirmed that this was the case.

Members thanked the External Auditor for the report.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the External Audit Plan for 2017-18 be noted; and

[2] the audit fee of £29,860 for 2017-18 be approved.

6 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2018-19

Kevin Lloyd, the Internal Auditor from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), presented the report to Members which contained the proposed Internal Audit Plan (the Plan) for 2018-19.

The Internal Auditor referred Members to the one page summary of the Plan which provided an overview of how it had been developed and how MIAA would deliver the Authority's internal audit services in 2018-19. He also drew Members attention to the detail of the proposed audits and the planned delivery dates. He highlighted a number of key areas of work including HMICFRS Inspectorate, organisational performance and the combined Fire and Police Financial systems (ORACLE Fusion).

A Member asked if an explanation of Oracle Fusion could be provided and the Head of Finance explained that it was a new cloud based system that was being implemented to replace the current system used by Multi-Force Shared Service (MFSS) which provided financial systems for a number of police services. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive added that there were a number of partners

engaged in the MFSS and this was a good example of collaborative work between emergency services.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Internal Audit Plan for 2018-19 be approved.