



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 24 April 2024 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors Stef Nelson (Chair), Sherin Akhtar, Rachel Bailey, Steve Collings, Razia Daniels, Brian Gallagher, Phil Harris, Marilyn Houston, Gina Lewis, Nick Mannion, Karen Mundry, Stuart Parker, Rob Polhill, Margaret Simon, Peter Walker, Peter Wheeler and Norman 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 received from Councillors John Bird, David Brown, Kath Buckley, Peter Coan, Rob Moreton and Laura Smith.

C Chair's Announcements

The Chair asked Members to note the content of the Chair's announcements which included details of Authority achievements and events Members had attended since the last meeting of the Fire Authority.

The Chair advised that Councillor Kath Buckley was standing down as a Warrington Elected Member. The Chair took the opportunity to thank Councillor Kath Buckley for all her hard work and commitment she had given to the Fire Authority over the years and wished her all the best for the future.

D Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

E Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions submitted.

F Minutes of Fire Authority

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 14th February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

G Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 6th March 2024 be noted.

H Minutes of Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee held on 18th March 2024 be noted.

I Minutes of Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED:

[1] That the minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on 17th April 2024 be noted; and

[2] That the current Member Champion arrangements for 2023-24 be carried forward into 2024-25.

J Minutes of Audit Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 17th April 2024 be noted.

K Notes of the Member Training and Development Group

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Member Training and Development Group held on 26th March 2024 be noted.

2 STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2023-24

The Director of Governance introduced the report that sought approval of the Statement of Assurance 2023-24, as required in the Fire and Rescue National Framework. The Statement had been prepared in accordance with national guidance and included sections on financial assurance, governance and operational assurance.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Statement of Assurance 2023-24 be approved.

3 REVIEW OF MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2023-24 AND MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024-25

The Director of Governance presented the report which contained a review of the member development activities over the last year and included a summary of the delivery of the Member Training and Development Programme.

The report also presented the proposed Member Training and Development Programme for 2024-25 for approval.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Member Training and Development activities for 2023-24 be noted; and

[2] the Member Training and Development Programme for 2024-25 be approved.

4 2023-24 STAFF ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The Engagement and Public Affairs Manager presented a report that provided an overview from the Staff Engagement Forum and update on the subjects considered by the Forum and the outcomes of work undertaken by it during 2023-24.

Lottie Germaney and Martin Dodd, Co-Chairs of the Forum were in attendance and gave a presentation on the work of the Staff Engagement Forum through its tenure, which included information on the following:-

- Integration between operational and non-operational staff
- Development of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28
- 2023 Staff Survey and HMICFRS Feedback
- Promotion board process
- Review of the Ignite suggestion scheme
- Internal communications and engagement
- Charity Fundraiser

A Member asked if environment and sustainability had been considered by the Forum. In response, one of the Co-Chairs explained that this was part of the Forum's remit this year and would be considered in the next tenure.

The Treasurer advised that the Carbon Literacy Programme was being rolled out across the organisation. In addition, replacement and modernised fire stations to reduce the carbon footprint of the Service were helping.

The Chair asked that officers provide an update on environmental issues at the next Member Planning Day.

Members welcomed the positive work of the Staff Engagement Forum and thanked those involved for their hard work and commitment during the year.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the report and presentation be noted; and

[2] an Environment Update be provided at the next Member Planning Day.

5 SALE OF HOUSES IN STOCKTON HEATH

The Head of Service Improvement presented a report which sought approval for the sale of service houses in Stockton Heath.

Members were advised that the service owned 10 houses in Stockton Heath which were historically used as housing for the day crewed staff prior to the change to on-call. The Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 stated the intention to sell the houses in Stockton Heath to contribute to the capital programme, e.g. to assist with the cost of replacing the fire station in Ellesmere Port and Warrington.

Members discussed the process that would be used to sell the properties. In response, the Head of Service Improvement confirmed that the houses would only be sold when they became vacant in line with the wider project to cease the on-call cover. The Joint Estates Team would manage the process of the sale on behalf of the Service as they had done previously when surplus houses had been sold.

RESOLVED: That

[1] Officers be authorised to arrange the sale of the houses at Stockton Heath.