



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 22 June 2022 at Lecture Theatre - Training Centre, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors Bob Rudd (Chair), Rachel Bailey, Michael Beanland, David Brown, Kath Buckley, Razia Daniels, Brian Gallagher, Phil Harris, Gina Lewis, Nick Mannion, Rob Moreton, Karen Mundry, Denis Murphy, Stef Nelson, James Nicholas, Nathan Pardoe, Stuart Parker, Jonathan Parry, Rob Polhill, 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 Fire Authority Membership 2022-23

C Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Marilyn Houston.

D Election of Chair

The Director of Governance and Commissioning asked for nominations from Members for the position of Chair.

Councillor Bob Rudd was nominated and seconded. As there were no other nominations he was duly appointed Chair of the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Bob Rudd be appointed as Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in June 2023.

On taking the Chair Councillor Bob Rudd thanked Members for their continued support.

E Election of Deputy Chair

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Deputy Chair. Councillor Stef Nelson was nominated and seconded. As there were no other nominations he was duly appointed Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Stef Nelson be appointed as Deputy Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in June 2023.

F Appointment of Group Spokespersons

A political group may appoint a Group Spokesperson. Four political groups exist for 2022-23, Labour (12 members); Conservative (7 members), Liberal Democrat (2 members) and Independent (2 members).

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments of Group Spokespersons be noted:

Labour: Councillor Bob Rudd
Conservative: Councillor Stuart Parker
Liberal Democrat: Councillor Denis Murphy
Independent: Councillor James Nicholas

G Appointment of Lead Members

Each constituent authority may appoint a Lead Member.

RESOLVED:

That the following appointments of Lead Members be noted:

Cheshire East: Councillor Nick Mannion
Cheshire West and Chester: Councillor Gina Lewis
Halton: Councillor Stef Nelson
Warrington: Councillor Karen Mundry

H 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, on behalf of the Authority thanked former Members of the Fire Authority, Councillors Mike Biggin (Warrington), Martyn Delaney (Cheshire West and Chester), Phil Easty (Warrington) and Jill Houlbrook (Cheshire West and Chester) for their commitment and support to the Fire Authority over the years and wished them all the best for the future.

The Chair on behalf of the Authority took the opportunity to welcome new Members, Councillors Denis Murphy (Cheshire East), Nathan Pardoe (Cheshire West and Chester), Kath Buckley and Peter Walker (Warrington) to the Authority.

The Chair, on behalf of the Authority also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Stuart Parker on his MBE awarded in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours.

I Declaration of Members' Interests

Members from Cheshire West and Chester Council, Councillors Razia Daniels, Gina Lewis, Nathan Pardoe, Stuart Parker, Bob Rudd, Norman Wright and Peter Wheeler, declared an 'Other Registerable Interest' in Items 6 and 8 (Minute 6 and 8 refers). The Items were concerned with the possible sale of surplus land to the rear of Chester Fire Station to Cheshire West and Chester.

Councillors Razia Daniels, Gina Lewis, Nathan Pardoe, Stuart Parker, Bob Rudd, Norman Wright and Peter Wheeler left the room for the consideration of these Items.

J Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions submitted.

K Minutes of Fire Authority

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 27th April 2022 be approved as a correct record.

L Minutes of Estates and Property Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Brigade Manager's Pay and Performance Committee held on 1st March 2022 be noted.

M Minutes of Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 27th April 2022 be noted.

N Urgent Business to be determined between Fire Authority Meetings

The Director of Governance and Commissioning reported that an item of business 'Proposal to allocate additional Capital Funding to the Crewe Fire Station Project' was considered to be sufficiently urgent that it could not wait until this meeting. It was determined using the 'urgency procedure' contained in paragraphs 4.87 and 4.89 of the Constitution. The Chair and Group Spokesperson supported the action.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the urgent business decision the 'Proposal to allocate additional Capital Funding to the Crewe Fire Station Project' be noted.

O Appointments of Committees etc., Outside Bodies and Member Roles 2022-23

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report that covered the following items:

- a) Responsibilities of the Fire Authority and its committees, boards etc.;
- b) Political proportions on the Fire Authority;
- c) Political proportionality rules (where they apply and where they do not and their affect upon the allocation of seats on committees etc.);
- d) Appointment of Members to available seats on committees etc.;
- e) Involvement of independent (non-elected) member;
- f) Appointments to outside bodies;
- g) Appointment of Member Champions; and
- h) Continuation of Member/officer buddy arrangements.

Completed versions of Appendices 2B, 3 and 4 were provided to all Members during the meeting in order for them to check the documents for accuracy prior to approval.

A complete list of the appointments made at the Fire Authority meeting (Appendices 2B, 3 and 4) are attached as an Annex to these minutes.

Note: Since the meeting took place two Member Champion roles have changed. Councillor Nathan Pardoe was Member Champion for Procurement. On 5th September 2022 he became Member Champion for Information and ICT. Councillor Rob Polhill was Member Champion for Information and ICT. On 5th September 2022 he become Member Champion for Procurement. This is noted on the Annex to these minutes.

RESOLVED That:

- [1] the responsibilities of the Fire Authority set out in Appendix 1A be confirmed;**
- [2] the responsibilities of Committees, Boards and Groups set out in Appendix 1B be agreed;**
- [3] the political proportions on the Fire Authority set out in paragraph 4 be agreed;**
- [4] the approach to the allocation of seats explained in paragraphs 5 to 8 and the revised copy of Appendix 2A be agreed;**
- [5] the appointments required as set out in Appendix 2B be agreed (see Annex);**

- [6] the involvement of independent (non-elected) member (to act in an advisory capacity) as set out in paragraphs 10 to 12 of the report and shown in Appendix 2B be agreed (see Annex);
- [7] the appointments to outside bodies set out in Appendix 3 be agreed (see Annex);
- [8] the appointments of Member Champions set out in Appendix 4 be agreed (see Annex); and
- [9] the continuation of the Member/officer buddy arrangements be agreed.

P Programme of Member Meetings 2022-23

RESOLVED:

That the Programme of Member Meetings for 2022-23 be noted.

Q Constitution

The constitution had been updated to include the changes made by the Fire Authority during 2021-22.

RESOLVED: That

The Fire Authority's Constitution be adopted.

2 FINANCE REPORT - END OF YEAR 2021-22

The Treasurer introduced the report which provided a review of the Service's revenue outturn financial position and reported on progress against the capital programme at the end of the 2021-22.

The Treasurer informed Members that a summary of the estimated revenue outturn for 20221-22 was shown in Table 1 of the report. There was an estimated underspend against budget of £0.31m. Appendix 3 to the report showed the estimated capital outturn against the capital programme. There was an estimated overspend of £1.43m.

At the time of writing the report the outturn position for council tax and non-domestic rates, including the relevant business rates Section 31 grant, had not been received from the billing authorities. The statutory deadline for this information to be forwarded to the Authority was 30th June 2022. It was not anticipated that this would materially change the estimated outturn.

The Treasurer referred Members to the section of the report containing information on the Authority's reserves and explained that the General Reserve was approximately £2.2m, which was broadly equivalent to 5% of the net revenue budget and in line with the approved Reserves Strategy.

The Treasurer drew Members' attention to the section of the report containing information on the Authority's Capital Programme. He explained that the table at paragraph 32 of the report contained details of proposed capital funding.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the outturn position (subject to audit and the finalisation of the local authorities non-domestic rates collection fund/Section 31 grant) be noted; and

[2] the movement in reserves as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

3 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Treasurer presented a report which provided a review of the Authority's treasury management activities during 2021-22. The report also provided information about compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices during the year.

The Treasurer highlighted the key areas of the report which provided details on the following:

- a) the Authority's loans portfolio position at 31st March 2022;
- b) the Authority's investment portfolio position at 31st March 2022;
- c) a summary of performance for the year 2021-22; and
- d) the Authority's performance in 2021-22 against the key Prudential Indicators.

Members were reminded that all of the 2021-22 figures in the report remained subject to audit.

A Member asked a question in respect of the ethical, social and environmental policies of those organisations in which the Authority invested surplus funds. In response, the Treasurer advised that he would provide a detailed answer outside the meeting.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report on treasury management activity for 2021-22 be noted; and

[2] the prudential and treasury management outturn indicators as detailed in the report be noted.

4 REVIEW OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2021-22 AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2022-23

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

The report also presented the proposed Member Training and Development Programme for 2022-23 for approval.

Councillor Gina Lewis, Chair of the Member Training and Development Group thanked all Members of the Fire Authority for their attendance and contributions to the Authority's Member Training and Development Programme throughout the year and encouraged all Members to attend the training and development sessions planned for 2022-23.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Member Development activities for 2021-22 as set out in Appendix 1 be noted; and**
- [2] the Member Development Programme for 2022-23 as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.**

5 SPRINKLER PLEDGE AND PROPOSED SPRINKLER MOTION

The Head of Prevention and Protection presented a report that sought approval of the Authority's sprinkler pledge and sprinkler motion. The intention was to have the sprinkler motion presented to the respective constituent authorities' Council Meetings by Fire Authority Members.

Members were advised that the sprinkler pledge demonstrated the Fire Authority's commitment to promoting the installation of sprinklers in more buildings.

Members welcomed the sprinkler pledge and motion and thanked both officers and the Members of the Sprinkler Group for the work that it had done to promote the use of sprinklers across Cheshire.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the sprinkler pledge be approved; and**
- [2] the wording of the sprinkler motion be approved.**

6 SALE OF SURPLUS LAND TO THE REAR OF CHESTER FIRE STATION

Members of the Fire Authority appointed by Cheshire West and Chester Council left the meeting prior to this item being considered.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning presented a report that asked Members to determine whether to sell some surplus land to the rear of Chester Fire Station.

Members were advised that in the past twenty months officers had been in dialogue with Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (CWACBC) about the potential sale of the surplus land. Initial soundings of some Members of the Fire Authority

suggested that they would be amenable to a sale to CWACBC.

CWACBC had stated that it was exploring a range of options for the surplus land and that it would wish to proceed, subject to the production of a viable proposal and to planning.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the sale of the surplus land to the rear of Chester Fire Station to Chester West and Chester Borough Council, be approved in principle, subject to suitable terms and conditions being agreed (with the Director of Governance and Commissioning and Treasurer approving such terms and conditions on behalf of the Fire Authority).

7 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated:

Item 3 – Sale of Surplus Land to the Rear of Chester Fire Station

Paragraph

(3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

8 SALE OF SURPLUS LAND TO THE REAR OF CHESTER FIRE STATION

The report was not discussed, but the figure in the report was noted when considering Item 6, above.