



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 21 June 2017 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.30 am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors M Biggin, D Bailey, P Booher, H Deynem, A Dirir, D Flude, P Harris, D Mahon, D Marren, J Mercer, G Merry, 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 received from Councillors E Johnson, J Saunders and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire – David Keane.

**C Appointments to the Fire Authority**

It was noted that the following Members had been appointed to the Fire Authority by the respective constituent authorities:

Representing Cheshire East Borough Council (5 Con, 2 Lab, 1 Ind)

**Conservative**

Cllr D Marren  
Cllr G Merry  
Cllr J Saunders  
Cllr M Simon  
Cllr J Weatherill

**Labour**

Cllr D Bailey  
Cllr D Flude

**Independent**

Cllr D Mahon

Representing Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (3 Con, 4 Lab)

**Conservative**

Cllr H Deynem  
Cllr E Johnson  
Cllr S Parker

**Labour**

Cllr P Booher  
Cllr J Mercer  
Cllr B Rudd  
Cllr T Sherlock

These Members were appointed for 2016-17. Appointments for 2017-18 to be confirmed after the Fire Authority has met.

Representing Halton Borough Council (3 Lab)

**Labour**

Cllr P Harris  
Cllr S Nelson  
Cllr R Polhill

Representing Warrington Borough Council (1 Lib Dem, 4 Lab)

**Labour**

Cllr A Dirir  
Cllr K Mundry  
Cllr M Tarr  
Cllr S Wright

**Liberal Democrat**

Cllr M Biggin

**Note:** The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire, Mr David Keane, has also been afforded certain rights in relation to Fire Authority business, including the right to attend meetings.

**D Election of Chair**

The Director of Governance and Commissioning asked for nominations from Members for the position of Chair. Councillor B Rudd was nominated unopposed and was duly appointed Chair of the Fire Authority.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor B Rudd be appointed as Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the annual meeting in June 2018.**

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

**E Election of Deputy Chair**

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Deputy Chair. Councillor S Nelson was nominated unopposed and was duly appointed Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority. Councillor Nelson also thanked Members for their continued support.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor S Nelson be appointed as Deputy Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in June 2018.**

**F Appointment of Group Spokespersons**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the following appointments of Group Spokespersons be noted:**

**Conservative: Councillor G Merry**

**Democratic: Councillor M Biggin**

**Labour: Councillor B Rudd**

## **G Appointment of Lead Members**

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the following appointments of Lead Members be noted:**

**Cheshire East: Councillor G Merry**

**Cheshire West and Chester: Councillor T Sherlock**

**Halton: Councillor S Nelson**

**Warrington: Councillor K Mundry**

## **H 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 Members had attended since the last Fire Authority meeting in April 2017.

## **I Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of Members' Interests.

## **J Minutes of Fire Authority**

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 be approved as a correct record.**

### **Matters Arising:**

#### **Item 6 – Scope of Crewe and Ellesmere Port Review**

Members sought clarification on the reporting timetable for the review of the second fire engines at Crewe and Ellesmere Port. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive confirmed that the Members' Planning Day scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> July would be the first stage of the reporting cycle with a formal report being presented to the Fire Authority at the September meeting.

Members asked for clarification on the number of fire appliances available for cover and also for further information on the activity levels and types of incidents that the SIUs attended. They also expressed concerns that SIUs were being mobilised to all incidents on a number of occasions. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive confirmed that there were 32 fire appliances currently available to provide cover on a day to day basis. He added that further details on cover arrangements and activity levels would be provided at the July planning day and that the Head of Service Delivery would provide Members with a breakdown of the types of incidents that the SIUs attended.

## **K Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee**

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 be received, for information.**

## **L Minutes of Governance and Constitution Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Constitution meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 were submitted together with a copy of the report that had been submitted to the Committee in respect of the creation of a new decision-making body.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that the Governance and Constitution Committee had discussed the report and made a number of recommendations to the Authority which were set out on the Fire Authority agenda. Members were asked to consider the recommendations made and decide if they wished to endorse them. He added that if the recommendations were agreed then Members were also asked to authorise the Director of Governance and Commissioning to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution (including the Members Allowance Scheme) to give effect to them.

Members discussed the proposals and it was confirmed that the Fire Authority would continue to make strategic decisions in respect of estates and property-related matters. The role of the new body would be to provide guidance to officers.

### **RESOLVED That:**

**[1] the minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 be received;**

**[2] a new decision-making body be created;**

**[3] the body be named Estates and Property Committee with the following responsibilities:**

**Ensuring that the Fire Authority's property management arrangements are appropriate, providing guidance to officers as necessary;**

**Providing guidance to officers and the Fire Authority in relation to property transactions;**

**Providing guidance to officers and the Fire Authority in relation to the sharing of its sites/premises with third parties;**

**Assisting in the co-ordination of and agreeing the prioritisation of property-related projects/programmes;**

**Assisting in the co-ordination of and agreeing the prioritisation of environmental projects/programmes and supporting officers and the Fire Authority in the delivery of matters that further the Authority's Environmental Strategy;**

**Engaging in key procurement issues as necessary;**

**Overseeing the arrangements for Safety Central.**

- [4] the membership of the Committee comprise of 7 Members (including the 4 Lead Members and the Procurement and Environment Member Champions plus one other Member) and one of the independent (non-elected) member;**
- [5] the Members' Allowance Scheme be amended so that the role of Chair of the Committee be allocated a special responsibility allowance in line with that payable to the Chair of Governance and Constitution Committee; and**
- [6] the Director of Governance and Commissioning be authorised to make such amendments to the Constitution (including the Members' Allowance Scheme) as are necessary to give effect to the decisions above.**

## **M Appointments to Committees etc., Outside Bodies and Member Roles**

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which 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 don't and their affect upon the allocation of seats on committees etc.);
- d) Appointment of Members to available seats on committees etc;
- e) Appointment of independent members;
- f) Appointments to outside bodies;
- g) Appointment of Member Champions; and
- h) Endorsement of Member/officer buddy arrangements.

Members were asked to note that the report had been prepared on the basis that Members agreed to the creation of a new decision-making body with seven Members appointed to it. Appendix 2B of the report contained information in respect of the political proportionality rules and allocation of seats on committees etc. Appendix 2C contained details of appointments required to committees, boards and groups. Appendix 3 showed the required appointments to outside bodies and Appendix 4 detailed Member Champion roles. Details of the proposed nominations to the various committees, outside organisations and member champion roles were provided by the three political groups and distributed at the meeting.

A complete list of the appointments made at the Fire Authority meeting is attached as an annex to these minutes.

**RESOLVED That:**

- [1] the responsibilities of the Fire Authority set out in Appendix 1 be confirmed;**
- [2] the responsibilities of Committees, Boards and Groups set out in Appendix 2A (with the addition of the new Member decision-making body – Estates and Property Committee) 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 6 and 7 and Appendix 2B be agreed;**
- [5] the appointments required as set out in Appendix 2C (see annex) be agreed;**
- [6] the appointment of independent members (to act in an advisory capacity) as set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report and shown in Appendix 2C (see annex) be agreed;**
- [7] the appointments to outside bodies set out in Appendix 3 (see annex) be agreed;**
- [8] the appointments of Member Champions set out in Appendix 4 (see annex) be agreed; and**
- [9] the continuation of the Member/officer buddy arrangements be agreed.**

**N Timetable of Meetings 2017-18**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Timetable of Meetings for 2017-18 be noted.**

**O Constitution**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Fire Authority's constitution be re-adopted subject to the inclusion of the arrangements for the new decision-making body (Estates and Property Committee).**

**2 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT 2016-17**

The Head of Finance presented the end of year financial report for 2016-17 to Members. She drew attention to paragraph 3 of the report which detailed the current position in relation to the revenue underspend (£2.34m) and explained that Appendices 1 and 1A provided a more detailed analysis of the key areas of underspend. She informed Members that the year end position in respect of the capital programme showed an overspend of £226k equating to just under 1%

variance against a total programme of £22.9m. The remaining projects in the capital programme were now either complete or progressing well with the successful openings of Powey Lane and Penketh Fire Stations and delivery of new appliances. Further details were provided in Appendix 2 of the report.

The reserve position was detailed in paragraph 13 of the report and the Head of Finance drew Members' attention to the reduction of approx £10m in the total usable reserves as a result of the investment provided as part of the Emergency Response Programme (ERP). The remainder of the earmarked reserves (£20.1m) would be utilised to complete the ERP and support the implementation of IRMP proposals and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Head of Finance informed Members that the figures excluded the provisional year end underspend of £1.5m which was subject to audit.

Members discussed the report and it was mentioned that the reserves could be required for the refurbishment of existing fire stations. It was noted that reserves may also be required to support the MTFP because there was still uncertainty over future funding arrangements.

A Member queried whether the earmarked reserves for the IRMP could be used for both capital and revenue budgets and a Member requested further information on the budget for cross-border working with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The Head of Finance confirmed that reserves could be used for either capital or revenue spend with the exception of capital receipts which could only be used for further capital investment or repayment of debts. She also noted the request for further information on the budget for cross-border working and confirmed that this would be provided in due course.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] The 2016-17 end of year financial position be noted.**

### **3 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

The Head of Finance introduced this report which provided a review of the Authority's treasury management activities during 2016-17. The report also provided information about compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices during the year.

The Head of Finance highlighted the key areas of the report and provided details on the following:

- a) the Authority's loans portfolio position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017;
- b) the Authority's investment portfolio position at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017;
- c) a summary of performance for the year 2016-17; and
- d) the Authority's performance in 2016-17 against the key Prudential Indicators.

Members were satisfied with the content of the report and the explanatory notes provided.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the report on Treasury Management activities for 2016-17 be noted.**

**4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2017-18 AND REVIEW OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2016-17**

The report provided details of the Member Development Programme for 2017-18 to Members for approval. The Programme had previously been presented to the Member Training and Development Group (MTDG) at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and it had recommended that the programme be submitted to the Fire Authority for approval.

The report also contained a review of the Service's member development activities over the last year which included a summary of the delivery of the Member Development Programme and progress on the development and implementation of the Member Development Strategy 2017-18.

Councillor Flude, Chair of the MTDG thanked all Members of the Fire Authority for their attendance and contributions to the Authority's Member Development Programme throughout 2016-17. She also welcomed Lesley Thomson, the new independent representative on the group and thanked her for her input and support over the last twelve months. Finally she thanked all the officers who had supported member development throughout the year and emphasised the importance of member development activities going forward and the need to ensure that Members gained an understanding of the requirements of the Home Office inspection regime when it was introduced.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the 2017-18 Member Development Programme (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) be approved; and**

**[2] the review of Member Development activities for 2016-17 (attached as Appendix 2 to the report ) be noted.**

**Annex - Appointments to Committees, Boards and Groups for 2017-18**