



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on
Wednesday, 18 September 2019 at Lecture Theatre - Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire
at 10.30 am**

PRESENT: Councillors Bob Rudd, Michael Beanland, Razia Daniels, Martyn Delaney, David Edwardes, Phil Harris, Gina Lewis, Nick Mannion, Karen Mundry, Stef Nelson, James Nicholas, Stuart Parker, Jonathan Parry, Rob Polhill, Morgan Tarr, 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 Rachel Bailey, Mike Biggin, David Brown, Dorothy Flude, Terry O'Neill and Steve Wright and from 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 achievements and events.

D Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests. However, Councillor Nick Mannion indicated that he would be mindful of the potential conflict of interest that may arise at Cheshire East when the Council was considering any proposal relating to the Crewe Fire Station site.

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 24th July 2019 be approved as a correct record.

Note: Councillor Martyn Delaney asked officers to provide information about 'safety boats' which were mentioned in the supplementary question attached to the

minutes.

G Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 24th July 2019 be noted.

H Staffing Committee Responsibilities

The Director of Governance and Commissioning asked Members to consider allocating certain responsibilities to the Staffing Committee.

Four policies concerned with human resources/industrial relations had become the responsibility of the Fire Authority following the removal of Policy Committee from the committee structure in 2017. The Director of Governance and Commissioning advised Members that it appeared appropriate to pass responsibility for the policies to Staffing Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the following responsibility be added to the current responsibilities of Staffing Committee:

- **To approve policies concerned with human resources, industrial relations and pensions.**

2 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER - YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2019

Ged Small and Michael Green (the External Auditors) from Grant Thornton were in attendance to present the report.

The Annual Audit Letter provided a summary of the key findings arising from the audit of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2019. The External Auditors confirmed that they were satisfied that the Authority had put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

A Member queried whether the materiality determined for the audit of the Authority's financial statements of £736,000 (2% of the Authority's gross revenue expenditure) was similar to other organisations of a similar size and nature. The External Auditors confirmed that the figure was determined by considering the risks associated with the Authority and that it was in line with the relevant benchmark for organisations of a similar size and nature.

RESOLVED: That

[1] The content of the Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31st March 2019 be noted.

3 ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive introduced the report which sought Members' approval of the Annual Report 2018-19 and its publication on the Service's website.

He confirmed that, once approved, an electronic copy of the Annual Report would be published on the Service's website by 30th September 2019. Publication would be announced through the Service's social media channels and via mainstream media. It was also confirmed that hard copies would be made available in libraries and other public places.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Report 2018-19 be approved for publication.

4 CREWE FIRE STATION SITE

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided information about the outcomes from the feasibility work that had been carried out to assess whether it was possible to build a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site.

He informed Members that £200k had been committed by the Authority to enable officers to investigate the feasibility of the project and that only £50k had been spent to get to the position described in the report. The report highlighted several significant issues concerned with the viability of the project. Paragraphs 3 to 20 of the report provided an overview of the feasibility work: site analysis; site layout; architectural design; structural design; highways; and external issues.

Investigations into the feasibility of the project also revealed that the costs of a joint police and fire facility on the site would be approximately £18m, which was much higher than previously forecast.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning reiterated the conclusion in the report and the need to move forward with a fire-only project.

The Chair acknowledged the importance of efforts to collaborate with other emergency services, but felt that the joint project was no longer viable. Members unanimously agreed that the project should be ended and officers should begin developing a fire-only proposal for the Crewe Fire Station site.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the contents of the report be noted;

[2] the project to create a joint fire and police facility on the Crewe Fire Station site be ended; and

[3] Members instruct officers to develop a fire-only proposal for the Crewe Fire Station site.

5 JOINT USE OF BIRCHWOOD FIRE STATION BY CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which sought Members' approval of the terms of a lease of part of Birchwood Fire Station to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (PCC).

He informed Members that the Fire Authority had agreed to grant a lease of part of Birchwood Fire Station to the PCC at its meeting on 24th April 2019. Since then, minor changes to the terms of the lease had been agreed, including a change to the accommodation which would now be on the ground floor. The updated terms were shown in a table below paragraph 4 of the report.

A Member referred to Appendix 1 to the report which contained a plan of the area to be let at Birchwood Fire Station. He queried whether changes were being made to the current allocation of shower rooms and toilets for male and female firefighters at the station. The Director of Governance and Commissioning confirmed that plans were being developed for the fire station to be modernised, which included updating the current facilities by providing gender-neutral pods.

RESOLVED: That

[1] The lease of part of Birchwood Fire Station to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire on the terms outlined be agreed.