

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES of a MEETING of the WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY held at the Wiltshire FRS HQ, Manor House, Potterne, Devizes on Thursday 24 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: Cllrs C Devine (Chairman), E Clark, P Edge, Mrs M Groom, R Jones, J Knight, N Martin, C Newbury, G Payne, G Perkins, E Shaw and J Tray.

27 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 11 June 2015 were confirmed and signed.

28 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs B Wayman.

29 Members' interests

The Chairman reminded members of the need to declare any interests which the Authority's Code of Conduct required to be disclosed, or dispensations granted by the Clerk to the Authority or by the Ethics Committee.

30 Chairman's announcements

- i. The Chairman thanked Mr K Strickland for agreeing to carry out the role of Clerk to the Authority for the remainder of the Authority's existence, and welcomed him to the meeting.
- ii. Members were reminded that a group photograph would be taken after the meeting.
- iii. The Chairman paid tribute to all involved in the Blue Light Services Show held at Hullavington earlier in the month. It had been a very successful, well-attended event.
- iv. Members were invited to take part in a visit to the Bournemouth and Weymouth Safety Centres on 7 October.
- v. The Chairman said it had been a pleasure to participate, with the Chairman of Dorset Fire Authority, in the formal opening of the new control centre which was now handling Dorset's emergency calls as well as the Service's.

31 Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

32 Ethics Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Ethics Committee held on 26 August 2015 were received.

33 Committee memberships: substitutions

On considering a report by the Monitoring Officer and on hearing the views of the Chairman of the Committee,

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Resolved:

- a) *To approve the Monitoring Officer's recommendation that the current practice with regard to substitutions be continued.*

- b) *To note the right of duly-constituted political groups to change their members on committees by notifying the Clerk (as the Proper Officer designated for such purposes), as per paragraph 40 of the 2002 Opinion given by Michael Supperstone QC to Southampton City Council and appended to the Monitoring Officer's report.*

34 Programme and Scrutiny Board

The Acting Clerk reported that the meeting of the Board due to be held on 3 September 2015 had been cancelled because a number of the Board's members had been unable to attend. The papers for the meeting had been sent to the members, who had been invited to comment on them. No comments had been received which needed to be forwarded to the Authority for consideration.

35 Annual report

The Programme & Scrutiny Board's annual report for 2014/15 was received.

36 Finance Review and Audit Committee

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 30 June and 15 September 2015 were received.

37 Protection, prevention and operational delivery

A short visual presentation was made.

38 Firefighter pension scheme 2015: discretions policy

On considering a paper by the Brigade Manager, People and Development,

Resolved:

To approve the discretions policy as set out in appendix A to the paper presented.

In answer to a question, the Chairman asked that Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority be made aware of members' views that the membership of that Authority's Pensions Board should include at least one Authority member.

39 Combination with Dorset: Update report

A paper by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive was received. Concern was expressed by some members on the pressures on staff, an issue of which the Chief Fire Officer said the senior management of the new organisation were very conscious.

40 Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority

The minutes of the meetings of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority and of that Authority's Policy and Resources Committee held on 23 June and 22 July 2015 respectively, were received. Though outside the purview of this Authority, views were expressed on the size of the new Authority and on the latter's consideration of emergency response standards.

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41 Networked Fire Control Services Partnership (NFCSP) and Joint Command & Control Centre (JCCC) Projects

An oral report by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was received.

42 Dates of meetings

It was agreed to change the date of the December meeting from 10 December to 9 December 2015, at 10.30 a.m.

43 Urgent business

The Chairman agreed to the following item being taken as urgent business on the grounds that it had arisen since the agenda had been prepared and needed to be considered before the December meeting of the Authority.

44 Consultation paper: “Enabling closer working between the Emergency Services”

The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive reported that the Government had issued a consultation paper proposing greater collaboration between the Blue Light services and, more specifically, closer working between the police and fire & rescue services. Noting that the deadline for responses to the Government was 23 October,

Resolved:

To hold an extraordinary meeting of the Authority, on a date and time to be agreed by the Acting Clerk in consultation with the Chairman, to consider the consultation paper and the Authority’s response to it.

The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive also drew members’ attention to a speech made by the Fire Minister following an adverse report on the culture at one particular Fire and Rescue Service. Since this matter was in the public domain, he felt members needed to be aware, though he strongly emphasised that in his view the culture described in the report bore no relationship to that in the Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service. His remarks were endorsed by the Chairman.