



**Draft Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting at 10:00 hours on 15 December 2021. This was an online meeting held in Microsoft Teams.**

These are draft minutes to be approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority at their next meeting.

Members present:

Cllr Rebecca Knox (Chair)	Cllr Paul Oatway (Vice Chair)	Cllr Pete Barrow*
Cllr Richard Biggs	Cllr Brian Dalton	Cllr Malcolm Davies
Cllr Millie Earl*	Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Russell Holland*
Cllr Toby Johnson	Cllr Bob Jones	Cllr Kelvin Nash
Cllr Ashley O'Neill	Cllr Garry Perkins	Cllr Byron Quayle
Cllr Pip Ridout		

\*Note: Cllr Earl was not present in the meeting for part of the consideration of item 21/55 and subsequently left the meeting during consideration of item 21/60 and items considered thereafter, and Cllrs Barrow and Holland left the meeting during consideration of item 21/58 and items considered thereafter.

Officer attendance:

Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James  
Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Johnathan Mair  
Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter  
Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole  
Director of People Services, Jenny Long  
Head of Service Improvement, Jill McCrae  
Corporate Communications & Engagement Manager, Emily Cheeseman  
Executive Support & Democratic Services Manager, Gemma Kelly  
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw

**21/47 Welcome**

21/47.1 The Chair welcomed attendees. It was explained that the meeting was being held virtually via MS Teams due to new Covid measures and the Omicron variant. Jonathan Mair, Clerk and Monitoring Officer explained that Members would not make any decisions at this meeting but would be invited to say what

decision they would have been minded to make if it had been a formal meeting of the Authority. Then, with the benefit of Members' views, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer would use officer delegation 6.1.7 (h) to make a decision. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer added that for the purposes of this meeting the Chief Fire Officer had nominated the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to exercise the delegated authority in the absence of the Chief Fire Officer.

21/47.2 The Chair welcomed Cllr Millie Earl to the meeting representing Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council. Cllr Ann Stribley was also thanked for her extensive work for the Authority in her time as BCP Council representative. The Chair additionally paid tribute to retired Chief Fire Officer Darran Gunter who sadly passed away on 21 October 2021 and thanked those that had been involved in organising his funeral.

21/47.3 A roll call was taken, and Members introduced themselves.

#### **21/48 Apologies**

21/48.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Steve Baron, Cllr Kevin Small, Chief Fire Officer Ben Ansell and Head of Corporate Support, Vikki Shearing.

#### **21/49 Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interests**

21/49.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

#### **21/50 Welcome to new Member, political proportionality and change to the membership of the Finance & Audit Committee**

21/50.1 Jonathan Mair asked for nominations to replace former Authority member Cllr Stribley on the Finance & Audit Committee. It was explained that following the change in nominations by BCP Council to the Authority, there had been no significant change in political proportionality to alter the number of political members on the Finance & Audit Committee.

21/50.2 Cllr Baron was proposed by Cllr Rebecca Knox as the new Conservative member on the Finance & Audit Committee and there was no dissent to this proposal. In Cllr Baron's absence, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Derek James was requested to use his delegated authority to make the appointment of Cllr Baron outside of the meeting.

21/50.3 **RESOLVED: DCFO James stated that having listened to Members' views and having heard the decision that Members had been minded to make if this had been a formal meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority, he had decided, under delegated powers given to the CFO by the Authority, to appoint Cllr Baron to the Finance & Audit Committee.**

- 21/51 Review minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 30 September 2021 and any matters arising**
- 21/51.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.
- 21/51.2 DCFO Derek James reported on Action 21/37.7 regarding Members' seminars. This action was complete.
- 21/51.3 DCFO James reported on Action 21/41.5 regarding Home Office consultation on giving greater powers of competence to Police and Crime Commissioners. This action was complete.
- 21/51.4 DCFO James reported on Action 21/42.13 regarding information on how the Service compared with others in terms of total funding and also action 21/44.7 regarding details of how the Authority debt compared with other fire services. It was noted that these topic areas would be covered by a Members' Finance Seminar to be held in January 2022.
- 21/51.5 **RESOLVED: DCFO James stated that having listened to Members' views and having heard the decision that Members had been minded to make if this had been a formal meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority, he had decided, under delegated powers given to the CFO by the Authority, to agree that the minutes of the 30 September 2021 meeting be confirmed and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.**
- 21/52 Receive minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 15 September 2021 and verbal update from the 8 December 2021 meeting.**
- 21/52.1 Cllr Byron Quayle presented the minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2021 and provided a general overview of the meeting.
- 21/52.2 Cllr Quayle also gave a verbal update on the 8 December 2021 meeting.
- 21/52.3 **RESOLVED: Members received the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 15 September 2021 and noted the Chair's verbal update from the 8 December 2021 meeting.**
- 21/53 Public questions**
- 21/53.1 No questions were received from members of the public.
- 21/54 Treasury Management Mid-Year report 2021/22**
- 21/54.1 Ian Cotter, Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, presented the report. It was explained that as an update to the report, the level of under borrowing was anticipated to increase to £15m by the end of March 2022. The Authority was

working with its treasury advisors, Link Group, to assess further borrowing opportunities as it was advantageous to borrow at present.

21/54.2 Members welcomed the report and the Chair commented that in conjunction with Ian Cotter meetings were being arranged with Government Ministers to discuss the fairness of the funding system.

21/54.3 **RESOLVED: Members noted the Treasury Management Mid-Year report.**

**21/55 Service performance six monthly review 2020-21**

21/55.1 DCFO James provided a summary of the past six months' performance against the Authority's strategic priorities set out in the Community Safety Plan. A link to the presentation slides was provided within the covering report. It was explained that the review provided a quarter 1 and quarter 2 annual comparison and considered seasonal trends.

21/55.2 The detailed presentation covered the topic areas comprehensively. These included that the number of Safe and Well visits had now caught up with the COVID-19 backlog; the assistance provided to partner agencies during the pandemic; the number of road traffic collisions attended had fallen; that the high-rise building risk review had been completed ahead of schedule; that the number of responses to incidents had increased from 6606 to 7371 (including providing additional assistance to the ambulance and police services); the challenges faced with on-call recruitment; the financial outlook; the management of assets including reducing the risks around electricity outage at stations and strengthening the people process, including the introduction of new ethical principles.

21/55.3 In reply to Members' questions about on-call availability in towns and villages and the effects of housing affordability and employer's willingness to release staff from work, DCFO James and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Andy Cole explained the complexities of the situation that was faced. Work was taking place at a national level, through the National Fire Chiefs Council, to make representation. At a local level, geographic areas were being profiled in multifaceted way in order to seek improvements, for example by engaging with local businesses. However, it was difficult for the Service to address broader issues such as the cost of living. It was also noted that consideration had been given to having shared roles with the police, for example with Police Community Support Officers; however, the skills sets were different, and the sharing of roles was challenging.

21/55.4 In answer to a question from the Chair, ACFO Cole explained the studies that were taking place to analyse response times to incidents and how mobilising technology could be utilised to enhance the service. It was noted that response time was an element of performance reporting.

- 21/55.5 DCFO James and Jill McCrae, Head of Service Improvement, responded to the Chair's questions regarding the HMICFRS inspection and the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It was explained that in most cases there was alignment between the inspection criteria and the Service's KPIs and that dialogue took place with HMICFRS over areas where the inspection criteria were not well defined or where data quality required clarification.
- 21/55.6 **RESOLVED: That the performance of the Service over the past six months be noted.**
- 21/56 HMICFRS Update**
- 21/56.1 Jill McCrae introduced the report and summarised for Members the outcomes from tranche 1 of the HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service Inspections 2020/21 for effectiveness, efficiency and people, which had been published earlier in the day.
- 21/56.2 In reply to a question from Cllr Pete Barrow, the Chair informed the meeting of her understanding of the latest position with the publication of the White Paper on fire reform.
- 21/56.3 **RESOLVED: Members noted the HMICFRS Update report.**
- 21/57 Verbal update from Local Performance & Scrutiny Committees**
- 21/57.1 The Committee Chairs of the Local Performance Scrutiny Committees provided an update on the Committees' work.
- 21/57.2 **RESOLVED: That the update from the Committee Chairs be noted.**
- 21/58 Age Discrimination Remedy – Implementing the Immediate Detriment Framework (IDF)**
- 21/58.1 The Director of People Services, Jenny Long, introduced the report by means of a short presentation. Reference was made to the withdrawal of Home Office guidance on 29 November 2021 and advice to authorities not to process immediate detriment cases until enacting legislation was set in place, which was expected in April 2022. Legal advice was being sought by the Local Government Association on behalf of authorities.
- 21/58.2 Jenny Long continued that the current situation had been discussed and acknowledged locally with the Fire Brigades Union.
- 21/58.3 Members supported the recommendation of the report.

21/58.4 **RESOLVED: Members noted the report and DCFO James stated that having listened to Members' views and having heard the decision that Members had been minded to make if this had been a formal meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority, he had decided, under delegated powers given to the CFO by the Authority, to agree that an update on Immediate Detriment be provided at the Authority meeting in February 2022.**

**21/59 Member Development**

21/59.1 DCFO James introduced the report.

21/59.2 In reply to a question from Cllr Richard Biggs, DCFO James stated that Members would be invited to joint multi-agency exercises when held. In addition, in reply to suggestions from Members, DCFO James agreed to take an action to circulate to Members a log of their attendance at training events so that Members could engage in training and address gaps in their knowledge of the Service.

21/59.3 Members supported the recommendation of the report.

21/59.4 **ACTION: That a log of the attendance of individual Members at training events be circulated by Democratic Services.**

21/59.5 **RESOLVED: Members noted the previous Member development arrangements and DCFO James stated that having listened to Members' views and having heard the decision that Members had been minded to make if this had been a formal meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority, he had decided, under delegated powers given to the CFO by the Authority, to agree to the proposed Member development programme for 2022-2023.**

**21/60 Service highlights – public video**

21/60.1 Corporate Communications & Engagement Manager, Emily Cheeseman introduced the in-house video which can be found on the Service's You Tube channel. The Chair encouraged Members to promote this within their authority areas.

21/60.2 **RESOLVED: Members noted the Service highlights – public video.**

**21/61 Date of next meeting**

21/61.1 The Chair confirmed the date of the next Authority meeting as 9 February 2022 from 10:00am.

Meeting ended at 12.50hrs

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Initials \_\_\_\_\_