



DORSET
Fire & Rescue
Service



WILTSHIRE
Fire & Rescue
Service

Working together to make our communities safer

**Minutes of the
Inaugural meeting of the Shadow Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
held at 1230 hours on 23 October 2015 at the Milford Hall Hotel, Salisbury**

Members present: Cllr Mark Anderson, Cllr Les Burden, Cllr Mike Byatt, Cllr Ernie Clark, Cllr Ronald Coatsworth, Cllr Malcolm Davies, Cllr Christopher Devine, Cllr Peter Edge, Cllr Spencer Flower, Cllrs Mollie Groom, Cllr John Haines, Cllr Susan Jefferies, Cllr Bob Jones, Cllr Trevor Jones, Cllr John Knight, Cllr Rebecca Knox, Cllr Colin Lovell, Cllr Christopher Newbury, Cllr Graham Payne, Cllr Garry Perkins, Cllr Christopher Rochester, Cllr Ann Stribley, Cllr Joe Tray, Cllrs Bridget Wayman, Cllr John Wilson.

Officer attendance: CFO Darran Gunter (Chief Fire Officer - Designate), DCFO John Aldridge, Mr Phil Chow, Mr Derek James, Ms Jenny Long, Mr Jonathan Mair, CFO Simon Routh-Jones, Mrs Vikki Shearing, Mrs Jill McCrae,

Apologies: Cllr Abdul Amin, Cllr Beverley Dunlop, Cllr Phil Eades, Cllr Colin Jamieson, Cllr Ricky Rogers.

1. Apologies

1.1 Mrs Jill McCrae confirmed that apologies were received from Cllr Abdul Amin, Cllr Beverley Dunlop, Cllr Phil Eades, Cllr Colin Jamieson and Cllr Ricky Rogers.

2. Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest

2.1 There were no disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act.

3. Minutes of Shadow Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority meeting on 23 June 2015 and matters arising

3.1 Cllr Rebecca Knox asked Members to review and approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

3.2 Cllr Bob Jones advised that point 12.1 requires to be updated as the point was raised by Cllr Phil Eades.

3.3 Cllr Christopher Rochester also noted a type within the attendees list referring to Mrs Christopher Devine, rather than Mr.

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- 3.4 Cllr Christopher Devine advised that he had requested for Members to be referred to in the minutes as Councillor (Cllr) rather than Mr and Mrs. A discussion took place regarding individual preferences with regards to this.
- 3.5 Mr Jonathan Mair advised that practice varies between Authorities and either method can be used and highlighted that a house-style should be developed for these meetings.
- 3.6 Cllr Graham Payne proposed the use of Councillor; this was seconded by Cllr Mark Anderson.
- 3.7 Cllr Rebecca Knox asked for all those in favour, with the exception of Cllr Ronald Coatsworth, Cllr Christopher Newbury and Cllr Trevor Jones who were not in favour and Cllr Sue Jefferies who abstained from the vote, all were in favour.
- 3.8 Mr Jonathan Mair confirmed that from now onwards the use of Mr and Mrs will cease for Members and Councillor (Cllr) will be used.
- 3.9 **Action: Mrs Jill McCrae to update the minutes with the points of accuracy noted.**

4. Agree and adopt the initial governance programme, including the nominations to Shadow Committees

- 4.1 Cllr Rebecca Knox introduced the paper and asked CFO Darran Gunter and Mr Jonathan Mair to go through the paper with the meeting.
- 4.2 CFO Darran Gunter explained the requirement for the paper and took Members through the key points. He went on to advise that the report is a result of several discussions involving the members and officers in workstream 1 and also as a consequence of discussions between officers and both internal and external auditors, all of whom provided their approval and support.
- 4.3 CFO Darran Gunter took the Members through the recommendations and asked for Members consideration.
- 4.4 A discussion took place on recommendation 8 and the timescale for review of the total number of Members assigned to the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority. Members were keen for this to take place in 2017 to be aligned with elections. Planning for this will need to begin in April 2016.
- 4.5 Cllr Rebecca Knox confirmed with the meeting that in principle Members agreed with the possibility of the review being implemented in 2017. This was agreed by the meeting.
- 4.6 Cllr Rebecca Knox went on to discuss recommendation 7, highlighting the current arrangements for Member Champions in Dorset. Cllr Devine challenged the need for Champions. CFO Darran Gunter also noted that Wiltshire also have Member Champions in place.

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- 4.7 Cllr Bob Jones advised that at present he is the Member Champion in Wiltshire for Equality and Diversity and went on to advise that he would advocate that Member Champions were put into place from the start.
- 4.8 Cllr Mike Byatt also agreed the need for Member Champions and proposed that all listed within the report were needed.
- 4.9 Cllr Christopher Devine indicated a need to nominate 2 Members as RDS Member Champions. Cllr Peter Edge confirmed that he would be happy to be an RDS champion and outlined his previous experience.
- 4.10 Cllr Mollie Groom noted that at present there was no mention of a climate change champion.
- 4.11 Cllr Rebecca Knox confirmed with the meeting their agreement to recommendation 7 and the implementation of Member Champions. This was agreed.
- 4.12 Cllr Bob Jones asked how nominations would be made. Cllr Rebecca Knox confirmed that this would be via each Fire Authority Chairman.
- 4.13 Cllr Rebecca Knox asked the meeting if there was anyone who wishes to discuss any of the other recommendations within the report (recommendations 1-6).
- 4.14 Cllr Mike Byatt asked for clarity on quorate and substitutes, highlighting that he would recommend using the principles of reserves rather than substitutes. Cllr Ernie Clark went on to query where as an independent he stands. Mr Jonathan Mair advised that as an independent at present he remains in the same position as all other Members as at present all are currently ungrouped. Mr Mair went on to advise that Members need to consider if they want political groups, but until such time as a decision is made all are considered ungrouped.
- 4.15 Cllr Christopher Newbury advised that he would like to go through each proposed committee and agree the terms of reference and appoint the Members. Cllr Rebecca Knox advised that Members would be appointed to main committees and area boards today which will take things through to 1 April 2016.
- 4.16 Cllr Christopher Devine queried with such a wide geographical area a solution for reserves/substitutes needs to be considered to ensure that Members do not travel to meetings to find they are not quorate. Cllr Rebecca Knox advised that the new Democratic Services role within the Service will ensure that good systems are in place.
- 4.17 Cllr Mark Anderson raised concerns with making nomination today due to absences and requested that this is completed by the Chairman outside of the meeting.
- 4.18 Cllr Christopher Devine referred Members to table 2.4 within the paper, noting that the Policy & Resources Committee is set, that those Members currently standing on the Finance and Audit Committee within the separate Authorities would move across and the Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees would consist of Members from the relevant Constituent Authorities.

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- 4.19 Cllr Spencer Flower agreed with Cllr Devine noting that this would be a sensible option as there would be an opportunity to reconsider at a later date.
- 4.20 Cllr Rebecca Knox confirmed with the meeting that these arrangements would be in place until 1 April 2016, as appointments cannot be made beyond this. Cllr Mark Anderson confirmed his agreement with this.
- 4.21 Cllr Trevor Jones suggested that the substitute arrangements and decisions could be worked through in workstream 1 meetings. Cllr Rebecca Knox proposed to the meeting that the decision on the use of substitutes or reserves and the details for this will be resolved in workstream 1. Cllr Christopher Newbury confirmed his agreement with the proposal, but requested that the Appeals committee required further consideration today or at the next Shadow Authority meeting.
- 4.22 Mr Jonathan Mair asked the meeting to confirm their approval of recommendation 1 in relation to the Policy & Resource Committee terms of reference, constitution and nominations. Members endorsed and approved the terms of reference and for the current constitution and membership to continue.
- 4.23 Mr Jonathan Mair asked the meeting to confirm their approval of recommendation 2 in relation to the four Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees terms of reference, constitution and nominations. Members endorsed and approved. Cllr Ann Stribley requested that quorum for Bournemouth and Poole should require at least 1 Member from each Council.
- 4.24 Mr Jonathan Mair asked the meeting to confirm their approval of recommendation 3 in relation to the Finance and Audit Committee terms of reference, constitution and nominations. Members endorsed and approved, with agreement for the current Membership to be used from each Authority.
- 4.25 Cllr Trevor Jones requested for workstream 1 to review the possibility of the Finance and Audit Committee completing a light touch review of the KPI's on page 9 of the paper. CFO Darran Gunter explained that this would require an increase in meetings over a 12 month period for the Finance and Audit Committee but that this could be discussed in workstream 1 if required.
- 4.26 Mr Jonathan Mair asked the meeting to confirm their approval of recommendation 4 in relation to the Appeals Committee terms of reference, constitution and nominations. Cllr Mark Anderson noted he would like either the chair or vice-chair to be required to attend appeal panels of 3. Cllr Peter Edge confirmed that this would be desirable. Mr Mair noted that this would be logical when hearing staff appeals. Cllr Christopher Newbury noted that at present Wiltshire do not have a chair or vice chair on this board.
- 4.27 Cllr Ann Stribley advised that Members on this committee should undertake the relevant training and complete refresher training every 18 months.
- 4.28 Cllr Rebecca Knox requested for 10 volunteers for the membership of the appeals committee until 1 April 2016, Councillors Mark Anderson, Ann Stribley, Ronald Coatsworth,

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Sue Jefferies, John Knight, Garry Perkins, Graham Payne, Peter Edge, Christopher Newbury and Bob Jones volunteered.

- 4.29 Mr Jonathan Mair confirmed the membership with the group and asked for Members to approve and endorse the recommendation. Members approved and endorsed.
- 4.30 Mr Jonathan Mair asked the meeting to confirm their approval of recommendation 5 in relation to a Standards Committee. Members approved and endorsed the recommendation that constituent authorities for each Member would be requested that their respective standards committees would hear and receive any matters arising as appropriate for Members of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority.
- 4.31 Cllr Christopher Newbury asked if there would be costs associated to this. Mr Jonathan Mair advised that he has written to each council regarding this and he advised it would be reasonable for any costs to be met by this Authority.
- 4.32 Cllr Rebecca Knox noted that due to the time it is recommended that, with Members permission, recommendation 6 should be looked at outside of the meeting and brought back as a stand alone paper on the 1 April 2016 meeting. This was agreed by Members
- 4.33 **Resolve – Members endorsed and approved the terms of reference, constitution and nominations to the Policy and Resources Committee, confirming that the membership would remain as current.**
- 4.34 **Resolve – Members endorsed and approved the terms of reference, constitution and nominations to the four Local Performance and Scrutiny Committees, confirming that Members would attend the committee within their relevant council area. For Bournemouth & Poole one Member from each should be present to constitute a quorum.**
- 4.35 **Resolve – Members endorsed and approved the terms of reference, constitution and nominations to the Finance and Audit Committee, confirming that the current membership within each current Fire Authority would be brought together as one committee.**
- 4.36 **Resolve – Members endorsed and approved the terms of reference, constitution and nominations to the Appeals Committee, confirming the membership as Councillors Mark Anderson, Ann Stribley, Ronald Coatsworth, Sue Jefferies, John Knight, Garry Perkins, Graham Payne, Peter Edge, Christopher Newbury and Bob Jones**
- 4.37 **Resolve - Members approved and endorsed that the Standards Committees of each Constituent Councils would with their agreement receive and hear matters for their Members of the Fire Authority.**
- 4.38 **Resolve – Members agreed for a single paper to be brought back to the 1 April meeting to confirm the arrangements for the Pension Board.**

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- 4.39 **Resolve – Members endorsed and approved the implementation of Member Champions within the Authority. Nominations would be completed by Cllr Knox and Cllr Devine outside of the main meeting.**
- 4.40 **Resolve – Members agreed in principle for the review of Members of the Fire Authorities to be in place by 2017.**
- 4.41 **Action – Recommendation 6 to be brought back as a stand alone paper on 1 April 2016.**
- 4.42 **Action – New Authority to review Committee memberships on the 1 April 2016. Process to be started in 2016, following the Shadow period.**

5. Response to consultation for closer collaboration between emergency services

- 5.1 CFO Darran Gunter advised that the Shadow Authority had been given a small extension to complete a joint response to the consultation as their meeting was today the official closing date and took the meeting through the paper.
- 5.2 CFO Darran Gunter introduced the background to the report and key issues included.
- 5.3 Cllr Trevor Jones noted that he would suggest included within a covering letter a resistance to the Fire and Rescue being moved to the Home Office.
- 5.4 Cllr Christopher Devine queried the use of the word 'coterminosity' and his preference for plain English. Cllr Rebecca Knox advised that the wording and language used reflect those used by DCLG and the local government organisational debate.
- 5.5 Cllr Rebecca Knox thanked everyone for their involvement within compiling the response.
- 5.6 CFO Darran Gunter requested that a covering letter should be agreed by both Fire Authority Chairs. This was agreed.
- 5.7 Cllr Rebecca Knox confirmed with the meeting that Members approved and endorsed the recommendations of this report. Members agreed.
- 5.8 **Resolved – Members approved and endorsed the consultation response in Appendix A and agreed for the covering letter to be approved by both Fire Authority Chairs.**

6. Note statement of assurances of DFA and W&S CFA

- 6.1 Cllr Rebecca Knox welcomed Alex McCabe from KPMG to the meeting.
- 6.2 Mr Alex McCabe introduced himself and gave a brief explanation for the requirement of a Statement of Assurance to be completed by Fire & Rescue Authorities. Mr McCabe refereed Members to the two documents published by Dorset Fire Authority and Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority and confirmed that KPMG, as external auditors for both Authorities,

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were asked to review and comment upon the robustness of these statements. Mr McCabe advised that KPMG are content that both documents reflect an accurate position of each Authority and had no significant issues to raise, he went on to note that KPMG were pleased to see a link between the two documents regarding confirmation of the combination and future challenges.

- 6.3 Cllr Trevor Jones queried the situation at present where both Services have different valuation processes for their estates. Mr Alex McCabe advised that this is considered within the next paper.
- 6.4 Cllr Rebecca Knox asked the meeting if there were any further questions regarding the Statement of Assurances'. As there were none, Cllr Rebecca Knox thanked Mr Alex McCabe and asked to move onto the next paper.

7. Note external audit reports for DFA and W&S CFA

- 7.1 Mr Alex McCabe advised the meeting that as external auditors, KPMG, are required to provide an opinion on the statutory accounts for both Fire Authorities. In addition noting that they are also required to provide a value for money opinion, based on whether each Authority has appropriate controls in place to achieve value for money. Mr McCabe advised the meeting that an unqualified audit and value for money opinion has been issued for both Dorset Fire Authority and Wiltshire & Swindon Fire Authority.
- 7.2 Mr Alex McCabe advised that a risk has been raised in regards of the timings and two different ways in which the Services complete valuations of their properties and recommendations to resolve this have been made.
- 7.3 Mr Alex McCabe took the meeting through each Authorities audit reports.
- 7.4 Cllr Rebecca Knox thanked Mr McCabe for his reports and attendance.

8. Combination Programme Audit Report

- 8.1 Cllr Rebecca Knox welcomed Mrs Melanie Watson from KPMG.
- 8.2 Mrs Melanie Watson advised the meeting of the purpose of the audit complete, highlighting that this was to ensure that appropriate arrangements were in place to manage the transitional programme and achieve successful combination on 1 April 2016. Mrs Watson also advised that this was necessary for KPMG, to further ensure arrangements under the value for money audit requirements.
- 8.3 Mrs Melanie Watson noted that in completing the audit KPMG were assured that comprehensive arrangements are in place and that the programme is robust and on track. Assurance was given to Members of the positive work.
- 8.4 Cllr Rebecca Knox thanked Mrs Melanie Watson for her report and reassurance.

9. Go Live Audit

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- 9.1 CFO Darran Gunter advised the meeting that following the combination programme audit senior management have requested that a 'Go Live' audit be carried out by both Internal Auditors and the External Audit, to ensure that the programme is on track to meet the requirements of the combination for the 1st April 2016. CFO Gunter advised that this would be completed over the next couple of months with results due to the Service mid December and a report to Members in January.
- 9.2 CFO Darran Gunter introduced Mr Nick Hobbs, Senior Auditor from Swindon Borough Council. Mr Hobbs explained the joint approach with KPMG and South West Audit Partnership for the Go Live Audit confirming that a joint report will be produced for Members and presented in January 2016.
- 9.3 Cllr Christopher Devine asked if the scope of the finance section of the audit was wide enough to ensure that savings are being made. Mr Alex McCabe confirmed that KPMG were content that it does.
- 9.4 Cllr Trevor Jones praised the work so far on the combination programme.
- 9.5 Cllr Rebecca Knox thanked the Auditors for attending the meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

- 10.1 Cllr Rebecca Knox thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting confirming the date of the next Shadow Authority Seminar as 14 January 2016 1200hrs-1400hrs at Salisbury Race Course and the date of the next Shadow Authority meeting as 12 February 2016 also at Salisbury Race Course. .
- 10.2 Meeting closed at 1400hrs.

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