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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE
HELD AT WILTSHIRE FRS HQ, MANOR HOUSE, POTTERNE, DEVIZES
ON THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2015**

Present : Cllrs N Martin, J Knight and B Wayman.

1. Membership

The Clerk reported that, at its annual meeting on 12 June 2014, the Authority had appointed the above-named members to the Committee for the ensuing year.

2. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Cllrs Mrs B Wayman and N Martin were appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee respectively.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 May 2014 were confirmed and signed.

4. Members' Interests

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

5. Localism Act – Pay Policy

The Committee considered a paper by the Brigade Manager, People & Development to which was appended a draft pay policy statement for the year 2015/16 for approval by the Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. The proposed changes to the policy in comparison with that for 2014/15 were noted and discussed, some of which reflected recommendations in subsequent items of business on the agenda for the meeting.

Resolved:

- a) *Subject to changes, if any, being required and made to the statement in the light of the Committee's consideration of the business referred to in minutes 6 and 7 below, to forward the pay policy statement for 2015/16 to the Authority for approval.*

- b) *To ask officers to work with colleagues in Dorset Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) to produce a pay policy statement for approval by the new combined authority.*

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(Note: The statement recommended to the Authority for approval is set out at Appendix A to these minutes.)

In answer to a question from Cllr Knight, the Brigade Manager, People & Development briefed members on the current position with regard to the pilot scheme on salaries for retained firefighters.

6. Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) – Discretions Policy

The Committee considered a paper by the Brigade Manager, People & Development. It was noted that the Authority was required to adopt a policy on those discretions available to it within the LGPS, the pensions scheme applicable to corporate staff and control room staff. The Committee discussed each of the proposed policies in the draft statement appended to the paper.

Resolved:

- a) *To agree the LGPS discretions policy statement as set out at Appendix B to these minutes, and to forward it to the Authority for approval.*
- b) *To ask officers to work with colleagues in Dorset FRS to produce a LGPS discretions policy for approval by the new combined authority.*

7. Redundancy Policy Update

On considering a paper by the Brigade Manager, People & Development regarding the current position on discussions with the representative bodies regarding redundancy policies,

Resolved:

- a) *To approve an extension of one year (i.e. to 31 March 2016) to the redundancy policy for employees who are, or who are eligible to be, members of the LGPS, and to ask officers to inform the appropriate representative body of this extension.*
- b) *To ask officers to work with colleagues in Dorset FRS to produce a reorganisation, redeployment and redundancy policy for the new combined authority.*

8. Pension Boards – Firefighters' Pension Scheme

The Committee considered a paper by the Brigade Manager, People & Development on the requirement of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 whereby every public service pension scheme had to have a Pension Board responsible for ensuring high standards of governance. It was noted that, in

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respect of the LGPS, this would be a matter for Wiltshire Council as the administering authority for Wiltshire. However, as far as the firefighters' pension scheme was concerned, the requirement to set up a Pension Board fell on individual fire authorities.

The Brigade Manager told members that the preference of fire authorities in general was to be allowed to have regional Boards or, failing that, joint boards of neighbouring authorities. Representations had been made along these lines to the Dept. for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) but to date the DCLG's response was unknown.

Resolved:

- a) *To note that the minimum number of members of a Pension Board is currently proposed to be four and that there must be an equal number of employer and employee appointees.*
- b) *In the event of regional or joint Boards being permitted, to express the view that there should be parity of representation from the individual fire authorities comprising each such Board.*
- c) *To ask officers to establish a budget for a Pension Board.*
- d) *Noting that further information from DCLG may be forthcoming in early February, to ask officers to take such urgent action as may be required in the light of (i) the outcome of DCLG's consultation exercise and (ii) meetings of the network of fire authority finance officers.*
- e) *To ask officers to submit an updated paper to the Authority in February including (i) permissible options for regional, joint or stand-alone Pension Boards, (ii) membership of a Pension Board and (iii) the nomination of, and the delegation of powers to, an officer to act as Scheme Manager.*
- f) *To ask officers to advertise for expressions of interest from members of the firefighters' pension scheme to act as employee members of a Pensions Board.*
- g) *To receive a further report on this matter at the Committee's next meeting.*

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h) To ask officers to work with colleagues in Dorset FRS with the aim of forming a Pensions Board for the new combined authority.

9. National Framework and Firefighter Fitness

The Brigade Manager, People & Development made an oral report on changes which the Government had made to the National Framework which required fire authorities to establish a process for assessing the fitness of firefighters and supporting them to be fit. She said that the Service was aiming to have a fitness policy in place later in the summer. The policy would set standards allied to key regular activities, establish an assessment process, and develop systems for maintaining and supporting fitness. In answer to questions from members, the Brigade Manager explained the representative bodies' concerns and the impact they were currently having on industrial relations.

10. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to hold the next meeting at 2.30 p.m. on 10 March or such other date and time as may be agreed by the Clerk after consultation with members of the Committee.

(Duration of meeting: 10.05 a.m. to 11.15 a.m.)

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