



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

DRAFT Minutes of the
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority
held at 10:00hrs on Thursday 9 February 2017 at the
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury

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

Members present: Cllr Abdul Amin; Cllr Mark Anderson; Cllr Les Burden; Cllr Steve Butler; Cllr Mike Byatt; Cllr Ernie Clark; Cllr Ronald Coatsworth; Cllr Malcolm Davies; Cllr Chris Devine; Cllr Peter Edge; Cllr Spencer Flower; Cllr Mollie Groom; Cllr Colin Jamieson; Cllr Susan Jefferies; Cllr Trevor Jones; Cllr John Knight; Cllr Rebecca Knox (Chairman); Cllr Christopher Newbury; Cllr Graham Payne; Cllr Garry Perkins; Cllr Christopher Rochester; Cllr Ricky Rogers; Cllr Vikki Slade; Cllr Ann Stribley; Cllr Joe Tray; Cllr Bridget Wayman; Cllr Nick Martin

Officer attendance: Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Mr Jonathan Mair; Chief Fire Officer, Mr Benjamin Ansell; Director of Finance & Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow; Democratic Services Officer, Mrs Marianne Taylor.

1 Welcome

- 1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed attendees including members of the public and the press.

2 Apologies

- 2.2 Apologies were received from Cllr Bob Jones; Cllr Beverley Dunlop and Cllr Colin Lovell

3 Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest and Notifications of Any Other Business

- 3.1 The Chairman asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act.
- 3.2 No disclosures of pecuniary interests were reported.

- 4 Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 15 December 2016**
- 4.1 The Chairman asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.
- 4.2 The Director of Finance & Treasurer, Mr Phil, Chow drew Members attention to item 8.3 of the Minutes: “Mr Chow advised Members that the Authority must appoint an auditor by December 2017”. It was not the responsibility of the Authority to appoint the external auditor, and therefore a change of wording was required. Mr Phil Chow went on to advise the minute to read: Mr Chow advised that the Authority must have an appointed external auditor by December 2017 for the auditing of the following years accounts, and recommended the approval of option 4: opting into a national scheme operated by Public Sector Auditor Appointments Ltd (PSAA).
- 4.5 Members discussed and agreed the change and approved the minutes of the meeting subject to this amendment.
- 4.6 The Chief Fire Officer, Benjamin Ansell, updated Members on the current position of the Safety Centre and advised that the procurement, tender and planning permission are underway. He further advised that ACFO John Aldridge will give a full update at the Authority meeting on 8 June.
- 4.7 **Resolved: Democratic Services to change minute 8.3 of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting which took place on 15 December to read “Mr Chow advised that the Authority must have an appointed external auditor by December 2017 for the auditing of the following years accounts, and recommended the approval of option 4: opting into a national scheme operated by Public Sector Auditor Appointments Ltd (PSAA)”.**
- 5 Appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer**
- 5.1 The Appointments and Disputes Committee met on 31 January 2017 to consider the appointment of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations) following the recruitment process.
- 5.2 The Appointments and Disputes Committee recommended that James Mahoney be appointed as Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations); with a starting salary of £96,000, rising to £106,050; and that all other candidates be thanked warmly for their applications.
- 5.3 The Authority unanimously approved the appointment of James Mahoney and agreed the salary recommendation with a performance improvement plan of 6 months.
- 5.4 **Resolved: Members approved the appointment of James Mahoney to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operations).**

- 5.5 **Resolved: Members approved a starting salary of £96,000 rising to £106,050**
- 5.6 **Action: the CFO will ensure that all other candidates be thanked warmly for their applications.**
- 6 Verbal update of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 25 January 2017**
- 6.1 The Chairman gave a brief review of the recent Policy and Resources Committee meeting updating Members on its focus, which was to obtain guidance on the 2017/18 Budget and to receive an update on the work that Officers are progressing with in relation to health. The Chairman recognised and welcomed the good work being carried out by prevention and the work undertaken with Local Authorities and Social Care.
- 6.2 Members were advised that the Policing and Crime Act 2017 had now received Royal Assent and it was highlighted that this included a Duty for the Service to collaborate.
- 7 Budget 2017/2018**
- 7.1 The Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow introduced the report which provides the final position on the revenue and capital budget requirement for 2017/18; presented the Medium Term Financial Plan; and considered three options for fire precept Band D.
- 7.2 Mr Chow advised that the budget requirement for 2017/18 is set out on section 3 of the report. It included provisional sums for business rates income as at the time of writing we have yet to receive final confirmation from the billing authorities. The report considered three options for fire precept Band D, ie: 1.99% increase; 1% increase; and no increase. Option 1 was recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee for Fire Authority approval, endorsed by the Treasurer, ie: an increase of only £1.38 (2.6p per week) or 1.99% resulting in a fire precept Band D of £70.59, providing a net budget requirement of £53.735m.
- 7.3 Mr Chow also highlighted that the finance settlement was expected before this meeting however it had yet to be finalised by DCLG. He did not expect any change to the figures announced in the provisional finance settlement of 15 December 2016.
- 7.4 Members agreed the recommendations to: approve the revenue and capital budgets for 2017/18 and the Medium Term Financial Plan; approve the basic amount of fire precept Band D for the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue

Authority as set out in the appendix C, i.e. an increase of £1.38 (2.6p per week) or 1.99% resulting in a fire precept band D of £70.59; and authorised the Treasurer to issue precept notices on the Dorset & Wiltshire collecting authorities accordingly.

- 7.5 **Resolved: Members approved the revenue and capital budgets for 2017/18 and the Medium Term Financial Plan.**
- 7.6 **Resolved: Members approved the basic amount of fire precept Band D for the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority as set out in the appendix C, i.e. an increase of £1.38 (2.6p per week) or 1.99% resulting in a fire precept band D of £70.59**
- 7.7 **Resolved: Members authorised the Treasurer to issue precept notices on the Dorset & Wiltshire collecting authorities accordingly.**
- 7.8 **Action: The Treasurer to issue precept notices on the Dorset & Wiltshire collecting authorities accordingly**

8 Treasury Management 2017/2018

- 8.1 Director of Finance & Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow presented the treasury management paper advising that it was a regulatory requirement to bring to the Authority Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2017/18. He went on to advise that the regulation was part of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management (TM) Code of Practice.
- 8.2 Mr Chow took Members through Appendix A the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices (including the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy); and Appendix B the Capital Prudential indicators
- 8.3 Members discussed the paper and Mr Chow confirmed there was a procedure in place to cover overseas investments, following the Icelandic Bank situation, which required sign-off by the Treasurer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority and the chairman of the Finance, governance and audit committee.
- 8.4 The Chairman outlined the recommendations detailed within the paper that the Members were being asked to approve.
- 8.5 Cllr Christopher Devine proposed that all four recommendations be agreed and this was seconded by Cllr Trevor Jones; Members unanimously supported the proposal.
- 8.6 **Resolved: Members approved the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices (including the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy)**

- 8.7 **Resolved: Members approved the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement as defined in paragraph 3.11**
- 8.8 **Resolved: Members approved the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as per Section 5 (Pages 25-29), Appendix A of the Annual Investment and Treasury Management Strategy**
- 8.9 **Resolved: Members approved the Capital Prudential Indicators in respect of the Capital Programme 2017/18 (as per Appendix B)**

9 Proposed changes to the Governance arrangements

- 9.1 The Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Mr Jonathan Mair, introduced the paper advising Members that the aim was to clarify the Committees and their format to provide a clearer approach. He highlighted that the report included some of the recommendations that had come from the internal audit report, noting that the internal Audit report included a suggestion to add governance arrangements to the terms of reference of the Finance and Audit Committee. Following this suggestion Mr Mair highlighted the suggestion to rename the Finance and Audit Committee to the “Finance, Governance and Audit Committee”.
- 9.2 The Chairman of the Governance working group, Cllr Spencer Flower, confirmed his support of the recommendations for change outlined within the report.
- 9.3 Members discussed the report, highlighting the need for a further change in the quorate numbers for the two sub committees (Finance and Audit Committee and Policy and Resources Committee) suggesting that the quorate numbers for the Policy and Resources Committee and the Finance and Audit committee should be set at five Members on each of the committees.
- 9.4 Members also suggested that Group Leaders should be consulted with regards to populating the Appeals Committee.
- 9.5 The Chairman suggested to Members that the changes Members proposed should be considered further and that proposed changes to procurement and contractual regulations should be discussed between the Clerk & Monitoring Officer and the Chief Fire Officer.
- 9.6 Members agreed to the amendments to the Members’ Handbook, subject to Members’ suggested changes being considered further. This was proposed by Cllr Christopher Newbury and seconded by Cllr Spencer Flower.
- 9.7 **Resolved: Members approved the changes to the Members’ Handbook subject to amending the quorum for the Finance and Audit Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee to five.**

- 9.8 **Resolved: Members approved the change to the title of the Finance & Audit Committee to the “Finance, Governance and Audit Committee”.**
- 9.9 **Action: the Clerk & Monitoring Officer to consult with Group Leaders about Populating the Appeals committee.**
- 9.10 **Action: the Clerk & Monitoring Officer to amend quorate numbers on the Policy and Resources Committee and the Finance, Governance and Audit committee should be set at five Members on each of the committees.**

10 Pay Policy Statement 2017/2018

- 10.1 Director of Finance & Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow, introduced the Pay Policy statement for 2017/18. He advised that the Localism Act 2011 places an annual requirement on Authorities to produce and publicise a statement setting out their policies on the remuneration of their Chief Officers and lowest paid employees.
- 10.2 Members discussed the paper and the pay gap between the lowest and highest paid members of staff. Mr Chow confirmed the pay multiple comparator used by the Government was 20 and referred Members to paragraph 8.10 of the report which provided details of the levels operated by the Service, which were considerably lower.
- 10.3 Members agreed they would like more information in the report when it is next provided, so that they are able to consider it more thoroughly, highlighting the requirement for transparency.
- 10.4 Referencing Pay Banding, Mr Chow advised that the information is available in the Authority’s accounts on the website for the public to view and noted the requirement for further detail to support transparency. Members confirmed the importance of this, highlighting that not all members of the public had access to the internet.
- 10.5 Members requested that a breakdown of pay scales and wage brackets be provided to them separate from the meeting. Mr Chow confirmed that he would circulate these to Members.
- 10.6 Members suggested that within para 9.1 (Pensions) links should be provided to assist with access to other relevant information where it is available.
- 10.7 The Monitoring Officer & Clerk gave assurance that, with the links applied, the Pay Policy Statement would fulfil the requirement to ‘produce and publicise’ as set out in the Localism Act.
- 10.8 With that assurance Members approved the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2017/18 which was proposed by Cllr Ann Stribley and seconded by Cllr Garry Perkins.

- 10.9 **Resolved: Members approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.**
- 10.10 **Action: the Head of HR to provide links within para 9.1 (Pensions) of the Pay Policy statement to assist with access to other relevant information.**

12 Date of Next Meeting

- 12.1 The Chairman confirmed with Members the date of the next DWFRA meeting as 9th March 2017 for principle discussion of the future size of the Fire Authority along with items brought forward from the cancelled Policy and Resources meeting, previously organised for 28 March 2017.

The meeting closed at 11:20am