



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the  
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
held at 10:00 hours on Thursday 9 March 2017 at the  
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury**

Members present: Cllr Rebecca Knox, Chairman; Cllr Abdul Amin; Cllr Les Burden; Cllr Steve Butler; Cllr Ernie Clarke; Cllr Christopher Devine; Cllr Beverley Dunlop; Cllr Peter Edge; Cllr Spencer Flower; Cllr Mollie Groom; Cllr Susan Jefferies; Cllr Paul Kimber; Cllr John Knight; Cllr Colin Lovell; Cllr Nick Martin; Cllr Christopher Newbury; Cllr Graham Payne; Cllr Garry Perkins; Cllr Christopher Rochester; Cllr Ricky Rogers; Cllr Vikki Slade; Cllr Ann Stribley; Cllr Joe Tray and Cllr Bridget Wayman.

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

**17/12 Welcome**

17/12.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed attendees including Cllr Kimber to his first Authority meeting. The Chairman thanked the retiring Member, Cllr Mike Byatt, for his excellent contribution and commitment throughout his time as a member of the Authority.

17/12.2 **ACTION: The Clerk to write on behalf of the Authority to Cllr Byatt.**

**17/13 Apologies**

17/13.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Mark Anderson, Cllr Ronald Coatsworth, Cllr Malcolm Davies, Cllr Colin Jamieson, Cllr Bob Jones and Cllr Trevor Jones.

**17/14 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interest**

- 17/14.1 The Chairman asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. No disclosures were made.
- 17/15 Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 9 February 2017**
- 17/15.1 The Authority considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2017.
- 17/15.2 **RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed without amendment, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**
- 17/16 Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting of 25 January 2017.**
- 17/16.1 The Authority received the minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 25 January 2017.
- 17/16.2 **RESOLVED that the minutes be received.**
- 17/17 Independent review of Conditions of Service for Fire and Rescue staff in England**
- 17/17.1 The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) introduced his presentation and provided Members with an update on the initial gap analysis presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 29 November 2016. He outlined the links to the speech made by the Minister for Policing and the Fire Service on 7 February 2017. He further outlined the key focus areas for fire and rescue service reform.
- 17/17.2 The CFO advised Members that, to reinforce his message, the Minister had recently announced that the first areas of focus for the new inspection regime would be diversity, collaboration and flexible deployment.
- 17/17.3 The CFO added he was currently further strengthening the performance management regime within the Service and the Member oversight arrangements to ensure that the Authority was in the best possible position when the inspection process was initiated. He advised that a new further corporate priority and associated key lines of enquiry would be designed to respond to the Thomas Review to be monitored through the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee. This would be brought back to the Authority at its meeting on 8 June 2017 for its consideration.
- 17/17.4 Members' attention was directed to Appendix A to the report: Gap analysis. Members discussed a wide range of issues associated with the report and the position of the Authority in relation to the findings.

- 17/17.5 Members requested that the results of the staff engagement survey be presented to the next meeting of the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee on 7 July 2017.
- 17/17.6 Members discussed the Ministerial vision around the level of educational attainment for those entering the Fire and Rescue Service. Some Members agreed that there was a need to attract people with higher academic achievements into the Fire and Rescue Service. Other Members challenged the reasoning behind and expressed concern about changes which they believed would unnecessarily restrict entry to the Service by some candidates without the very highest standards of educational attainment.
- 17/17.7 Members requested that expected entry levels for firefighters, both whole time and retained (on-call), be reported to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 June 2017 such that an Authority position could be communicated with the national working group via the Chairman
- 17/17.8 In considering the recommendations set out in the report, it was proposed that the word 'consult' be replaced with 'note'. Members agreed that this was appropriate.
- 17/17.9 **RESOLVED: That the progress made against the initial gap analysis since the first report was received be noted.**
- 17/17.10 **RESOLVED: That future reporting of progress be made to the Finance, Governance and Audit on a 6-monthly basis.**
- 17/17.11 **RESOLVED: Entry level qualifications for firefighters to be placed on the Policy and Resources Committee agenda for 27 June, for discussion.**
- 17/17.12 **ACTION: Democratic Services to update the Finance, Governance and Audit Committee agenda for 7 July 2017 to include monitoring of the gap analysis and results of the Staff survey.**
- 17/17.13 **ACTION: Democratic Services to update the Policy & Resources Committee agenda for 27 June 2017 to include expected entry levels for firefighters, both whole time and retained (on-call).**
- 17/18 Local Government Pension Scheme administration**
- 17/18.1 The Treasurer presented the report advising that it outlined the current position regarding the provision of administration of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and provides recommendations for the future harmonisation.
- 17/18.2 Currently the LGPS, applicable to corporate staff, was administered under two separate administrations. Staff who were previously employed by

Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority were included in the Wiltshire Pension Fund administered by Wiltshire Council. Staff who were previously employed by Dorset Fire Authority were included in the Dorset County Pension Fund administered by Dorset County Council. He added that all new corporate staff employed since combination had been included in the Dorset scheme.

- 17/18.3 Members were informed that, whilst it would be possible to continue to participate in both schemes, it was recommended that participation in a single LGPS would provide for a simpler structure, reduce ongoing administrative costs and have more efficient and effective single procedures.
- 17/18.4 Members discussed the paper and the options contained within it, namely:  
a) Option 1: Maintain two LGPS schemes;  
b) Option 2: A non 'clear-out' transfer of members and associated funds; or  
c) Option 3: A full 'clear-out' transfer of members and associated funds.
- 17/18.5 Members were advised that a contracted out reconciliation would need to be undertaken by the Service and that there would be a cost attached.
- 17/18.6 **RESOLVED: That the transfer of the LGPS administration to one of the current administrators under a full 'clear-out' option and application to the Secretary of State for this to go ahead be approved.**
- 17/18.7 **RESOLVED: That the Treasurer be delegated authority - after consultation with the Chairman, Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk & Monitoring Officer - to determine the LGPS administrator from April 2018**
- 17/18.8 **ACTION: The Treasurer to arrange to undertake a 'contracted out reconciliation'.**

## **17/19 Member Development**

- 17/19.1 In the absence of Cllr T. Jones, Cllr Flower presented the paper, outlining the voluntary process for supporting Members in their role. He explained that this provided a personalised opportunity to increase understanding of a complex Service and to discuss areas of Members' personal development that may wish to be pursued. Cllr Flower advised that the process outlined within the paper would both support individual Members and allow the Authority to demonstrate effective governance arrangements and alignment to the Adrian Thomas review, adding that this may be the subject of interest by future government inspections.
- 17/19.2 Members discussed the paper and raised concerns about section 3 of the report stating that ungrouped Members would be disadvantaged by the proposed procedure and the ability of the Service to determine that all confidential conversations had been completed.

17/19.3 In order to address this, Members proposed that paragraph 3.1 be reworded to say "... meet individually with their Group Leader or the Chairman..." And that the wording at the beginning of paragraph 3.5 "Following completion of all conversations," be removed. This was agreed.

17/19.4 Having considered the paper, Members approved the Member development process as amended.

17/19.5 **RESOLVED: That the Member development process be approved, subject to the following amendments:**  
(i) paragraph 3.1 be amended to read "... meet individually with their Group Leader or the Chairman..."; and  
(ii) the removal from paragraph 3.5 of the words "Following completion of all conversations".

17/19.6 **ACTION: Director of Corporate Services to amend the Member development process as agreed in minute 8.5 and put the necessary arrangements in place to deliver the process.**

## **17/20 Date of Next Meeting**

17/20.1 The Chairman confirmed with Members that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 8 June 2017 at DWFRS HQ, Wiltshire.

17/20.2 Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their hard work and dedication.

## **17/21 Consideration of the exclusion of the Press and Public**

17/21.1 The Clerk & Monitoring Officer outlined the law relating to the exclusion of the press and public from local authority meetings. He explained that there was a two-part test to be applied:

1. Is the subject matter of the report within one of the categories of potentially exempt information described in part 2 of schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 and
2. Is it in the public interest that the press and public should be excluded in order to enable confidential business to be dealt with in closed session.

17/21.2 In relation to the first part of the test the Clerk and Monitoring Officer explained that the information in the report related to the business affairs of the Authority and so was potentially exempt from discussion in public. In relation to the second part of the test Members would need to decide whether the public interest required that the item should be dealt with in closed session. In this respect he referred to sensitivity around the pre-

election purdah period and the timing of any consultation with constituent councils.

17/21.3 Members discussed the proposal to exclude the press and public for the reasons given by the Clerk & Monitoring Officer. However, following deliberation, Members voted in favour of keeping the meeting open to the public.

17/21.4 **RESOLVED: That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the agenda.**

17/21.5 **ACTION: Democratic Service to ensure that the report was made publically available and publish in line with other papers.**

## **17/22 Possible change in the membership of the Fire and Rescue Authority**

17/22.1 Cllr Flower introduced the report reminding Members that at its meeting on 23 June 2016 the Fire and Rescue Authority resolved that a Governance Working Group be formed to complete a review of the Authority's governance arrangements by May 2017.

17/22.2 The terms of reference of the Group included: to consider and provide options in respect of the total number of elected Members on the Authority and to determine the appropriate process for any subsequent amendment to the Combination Order and the Authority's standing Committees.

17/22.3 The Governance Working Group had met five times and a Governance Seminar was provided for all Members. There were a range of options for a possible reduction in the number of elected Members of the Authority; potential consequential changes to the Authority's governance arrangements and suggested next steps.

17/22.4 Members discussed the options fully and were generally in support of those options that gave equal representation between the north and south of the area served by the Authority. A number of Members raised issues associated with the timing of any potential reduction given that local government review was being considered across Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer stated that any reviewed membership as a result of Local Government Reorganisation in Dorset would not have a significant impact on the proposals being considered by the Authority.

17/22.5 Members also raised issues about the effect that any potential membership might have on the existing governance arrangements and the committee structures. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer explained that any significant reduction would necessitate a review of the Authority's governance

arrangements. Both of the predecessor fire and rescue authorities had operated effectively with fewer members and in a smaller Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority it would be possible to devise governance arrangements which maintained local accountability and at the same time improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority more generally.

- 17/22.6 The Clerk and Monitoring Officer also referred to the Adrian Thomas review, the Policing and Crime Act and recent announcements by the Minister for Policing and Fire as key factors driving the need to slim down governance structures across the fire and rescue service sector more generally.
- 17/22.7 After much debate and having been proposed by Cllr Flower and seconded by Cllr Perkins, upon being put to the vote, it was agreed in principle to support a reduction in the membership of the Authority to 18 members.
- 17/22.8 The Clerk & Monitoring Officer outlined the process that would follow this meeting; a letter would be sent to the five constituent councils seeking their views about the proposed changes. The views received would be presented to the meeting of the Authority on 8 September 2017.
- 17/22.9 **RESOLVED: That a proposed membership of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority of 18 be approved in principle as the basis for consultation with constituent authorities.**
- 17/22.10 **RESOLVED: That the views of the constituent councils be reported at the meeting of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority on 8 September 2017.**
- 17/22.11 **ACTION: the Clerk & Monitoring Officer to write to the constituent councils to consult them about the proposed membership changes.**

The meeting closed at 13:05hrs.

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