



**Draft Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting at 10:00 hours on 29 September 2022 held 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 its next meeting.

Members present:

Cllr Rebecca Knox (Chair)	Cllr Pete Barrow	Cllr Richard Biggs
Cllr Brian Dalton	Cllr Millie Earl	Cllr Brian Ford
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Cllr Bob Jones	Cllr Ashley O'Neill
Cllr Byron Quayle	Cllr Kevin Small	

Officer attendance:

Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell  
Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair  
Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James  
Director of Community Safety, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Andy Cole  
Director of People Services, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Jenny Long  
Director of Service Support, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Jill McCrae  
Head of Corporate Support, Vikki Shearing  
Corporate Communications & Engagement Manager, Emily Cheeseman  
Democratic Services Officer, David Shaw  
Executive and Democratic Services Administrator, Steph Howard  
Senior PA to Chief Executive Office, Samantha Stephens  
Building Services Manager, Jerry Welch  
Senior Building Surveyor, Simon Callan

**22/34 Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

22/34.1 The Authority marked its respect and paid tribute to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Chair made the following statement:

“On behalf the Authority and the Service, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

We send our deepest condolences to the Royal Family. The loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a devastating blow to the whole country and Commonwealth, but also to her family for whom she was a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Her loss has affected everyone, not just here in the UK but around the world. So many of our personnel are proud to wear her medals, including Queen's Fire Service Medals, those for Long Service and Good Conduct, or for one or more of her Jubilees.

For so many of us, we have only known Her Majesty as our monarch. We are grateful for her life of devoted service, and her lifelong support of the emergency services. She will be missed more than we can say."

**22/35 Welcome**

22/35.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

**22/36 Apologies**

22/36.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Steve Baron, Cllr Malcolm Davies, Cllr Russell Holland, Cllr Toby Johnson, Cllr Kelvin Nash, Cllr Paul Oatway and Cllr Pip Ridout.

**22/37 Code of Conduct and Declarations of Interests**

22/37.1 The Chair asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. No disclosures were made.

**22/38 Review minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 15 June 2022 and any matters arising**

22/38.1 The Chair asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.

22/38.2 The Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair, reported that further to Minute 22/27.17, on 27 July 2022 he had exercised his delegated authority to make in year changes, and that, for the Local Pension Board, Cllr Brian Ford had replaced Cllr Rebecca Knox as the Employer Member Representative and Cllr Knox had become the substitute member.

22/38.3 Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Ben Ansell reported on minute 22/28 White Paper – Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service. Following the earlier Members' seminar and the meeting of the Authority on 15 June 2022, delegated authority had been exercised to respond to the Home Office with the

Authority's position. It was noted that, since the submission of the response, there had been a number of political changes in those holding senior positions in Government, which the Authority was monitoring.

- 22/38.4 **RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 15 June 2022 meeting be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**
- 22/39 Receive minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 27 July 2022.**
- 22/39.1 Cllr Byron Quayle presented the minutes of the meeting of 27 July 2022 and provided a general overview of the meeting. He also explained that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for the 14 September 2022 had been cancelled during the period of mourning for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Relevant items of business would be transacted at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee to be held on 7 December 2022.
- 22/39.2 **RESOLVED: Members received the minutes of the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 27 July 2022.**
- 22/40 Public questions**
- 22/40.1 No questions were received from members of the public.
- 22/41 Treasury Management Annual report 2021-22**
- 22/41.1 The Head of Financial Services & Treasurer, Ian Cotter presented the report which set out the details of treasury performance for 2021-22 and the position at the end of the financial year. He explained that further to the publication of the report, the recent rises in interest rates were not problematic in the immediate term as the Authority did not have any immediate requirement to borrow, although there may be a need for some short-term borrowing in the early part of the next financial year to aid cash flow. The rise in interest rates was to the Authority's advantage as it would increase the income from its investments.
- 22/41.2 In reply to questions from Cllr Richard Biggs, Ian Cotter explained that the Authority's loans with the Public Works Loan Board were all on fixed interest rates, and that part of the Private Finance Initiative contract was linked to the retail price index, and this would mean that costs would increase by more than originally expected from April 2023. Allowance for this would be included in next year's budget.
- 22/41.3 **RESOLVED: That the Treasury Management Annual Report 2021-22 be noted.**

## **22/42 Annual report 2021-22**

- 22/42.1 CFO Ansell introduced the report and highlighted to Members the significant headlines within Appendix A – Annual Report 2021/22. CFO Ansell gave further details of the circumstances of the two deaths as determined by His Majesty’s Coroner, which were caused by fire as reported at the time of publication of the Annual Report, with two other cases awaiting consideration by the coroner. If it was confirmed as four deaths, this would still be the lowest annual figure since creation of the combined fire authority in 2016.
- 22/42.2 Cllr Quayle enquired if the societal return of £4.95 for every £1 invested in the Safe & Well provision last year, as detailed on page 12 of the Annual Report, was benchmarked from a national model. Ian Cotter replied that the figure was derived from value for money calculations on the Service’s costs and from national reports where available. CFO Ansell added that the National Fire Chiefs Council project on Economic and Social Value of the United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service was aiming to provide fire services with the ability to consider the economic and social value of their activities when planning, including reducing the strain on the National Health Service. The Chair commented that the ability to demonstrate that investing in the Service resulted in cost avoidance for others, was potentially beneficial when seeking external funding. Cllr Biggs further added that if the societal return data was peer reviewed, for example by a university, this might be useful in adding value to representations. CFO Ansell stated that the forthcoming His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report on the Service would provide clarification on this point within the efficiency pillar.
- 22/42.3 The Director of People Services, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Jenny Long, introduced the Annual Workforce Equality Report (Appendix B of report 22/42 refers). A presentation was provided to highlight key areas to the meeting.
- 22/42.4 In reply to a question from Cllr Ford, ACO Long explained that there were low numbers of staff experiencing long Covid-19. Those affected had their cases discussed with Occupational Health and had a support plan agreed.
- 22/42.5 In reply to Cllr Biggs’ question on the methods employed to increase the ethnicity of the workforce, ACO Long gave details of the local actions that were taken to meet with community leaders and to build relationships. CFO Ansell added that it was also important to engage with all communities to be more effective in reducing risks.
- 22/42.6 Cllr Kevin Small commented on the ethnicity figures on page 14 of Appendix B and the good internal processes related to disciplinary cases as set out on page 23 of Appendix B. Cllr Small suggested that in Appendix A, the 12.9% increase in average sickness levels, compared to the average during the last five years, would be reduced and be more truly reflective if the coronavirus pandemic figures were not included.

*Initials* \_\_\_\_\_

22/42.7 In reply to a question from Cllr Pete Barrow about cultural change and attitudes and behaviour of staff, ACO Long referred to the project that was being undertaken on bystander training designed to hold individuals to account.

22/42.8 Cllr Millie Earl asked how the Service prepared for extremes of weather resulting from climate change. CFO Ansell referred to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the work of our two local resilience forums in preparing a strategic risk register, which would be the subject of a seminar for Members.

22/42.9 **RESOLVED: Members approved the Annual report as set out in Appendix A and noted the Annual Workforce Equality Report 2021-22 as set out in Appendix B.**

### **22/43 Statement of Assurance 2021-22**

22/43.1 Director of Service Support, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Jill McCrae, presented the report.

22/43.2 Cllr Paul Hilliard enquired if a Local Government Association peer review of the Service would be beneficial. CFO Ansell replied that this would be something for the Chair to consider and highlighted that the Service's second inspection report was expected to be published by HMICFRS in December 2022.

22/43.3 **RESOLVED: That the Service Statement of Assurance 2021-22 be approved.**

### **22/44 Service highlights – public video**

22/44.1 CFO Ansell introduced the in-house video which was available on the Service's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/ZA5DFcpeF6M>. The video continues to be made available to local councils and others.

22/44.2 **RESOLVED: Members noted the Service highlights – public video.**

### **22/45 Date of next meeting**

22/45.1 The Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority would take place on 14 December 2022 at 10.00am.

### **22/46 To consider passing the following resolution:**

In accordance with Section 100A (1, 2 & 3) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public for the business specified below because it is

likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule

12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

22/46.1 **RESOLVED: To close the meeting to the press and public.**

## **PART 2**

### **22/47 Future Training Centre Provision**

22/47.1 The meeting considered an exempt report which sought financial approval to support improvement in the Service's future operational training facilities and to endorse the preferred option which was detailed as option 2 in the report.

22/47.2 Following thorough consideration, the Authority unanimously supported the recommendation as set out below.

22/47.3 **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That option 2 be agreed as the preferred option for the future operational training provision for the Service and that the use of financial reserves at the amount detailed in the report, to support the capital programme be approved.**
- 2. That the project oversight be monitored through the Finance & Audit Committee.**

Meeting ended at 12.40hrs

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