



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday 12 February 2014 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.30 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors M Biggin, D Brickhill, P Carey, D Flude, P Harris, E Johnson, L Jones, J Joyce, J Leather, B Livesley, G Merry, S Nelson, R Polhill, B Rudd, T Sherlock, M Simon, A Tate, C Thorley, D Topping, J Weatherill N Wright and S Wright.

**PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC**

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor H Mundry.

**B CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Cheshire Fire Cadets win National Road Safety Award**

The Chair congratulated the Service's fire cadets on winning a national road safety award as part of a campaign to help save young lives. Representatives from the cadet units were presented with their award at Brake's annual reception at the Houses of Parliament on 14 January. Councillor Livesley also attended along with road safety officers. The Chair thanked Councillor Livesley for his tireless efforts as the Road Safety Member Champion for the Authority.

**Stonewall Top North West Employers 2014 Award – 23 January 2014**

The Deputy Chair and the Chief Fire Officer had attended these awards which were held in Manchester. The Service had risen 20 places to number 25 in Stonewall's annual guide to the UK's top 100 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) friendly employers and the Chief Fire Officer also won an award as North West Senior Champion, for his commitment and support.

The Chair thanked the officers involved for their input in helping to achieve these awards and commented that the Service was one of only two fire services in the top 25 which was a significant achievement.

## **C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reminded Members that a dispensation was granted by the Governance and Constitution Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013 in relation to the setting of the Council Tax precept and the approval of the Members Allowance Scheme, which was effective for four years.

He explained that Councillor Steve Wright was not a Fire Authority Member at the time that the dispensation was granted and asked the Authority to extend the dispensation to him.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the dispensation granted to Fire Authority Members on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be extended to include Councillor Steve Wright thereby allowing him to take part in the debates and votes on the setting of the Council Tax precept, and approval of the Members' Allowance scheme (and any changes and/or additions to it).**

#### Item 2 2014/15 Draft Budget, Council Tax and Medium Term Financial Plan

All Members present declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item and sought to rely upon the dispensation.

#### Item 9 Review of the Members' Allowance Scheme

All Members present declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item and sought to rely upon the dispensation.

## **D MINUTES**

Members were asked to confirm the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 11 December 2013 and receive, for information, minutes of the Policy Committee, Performance and Overview Committee, Brigade Managers Pay & Performance Committee and notes of the Member Training and Development Group.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the Minutes of the meeting of the Cheshire Fire Authority held on 11 December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record; and**
- [2] the Minutes of the following meetings be received:  
Policy Committee – 29 January 2014;  
Performance and Overview Committee – 5 February 2014; and  
Brigade Managers' Pay & Performance Committee – 10 January 2014;**

- [3] the Notes of the Member Training and Development Group – 19 December 2013, be received.**

**E APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS**

Members were asked to note that Merseyside Internal Audit Agency had been appointed as the Authority's internal auditors from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.

A Member queried whether there would be any savings achieved through this appointment and the Head of Finance responded that the costs would be comparable with the outgoing provider.

**F PRESENTATION OF PETITION**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members that a petition had been received from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in opposition to reduced crewing levels. The petition had been submitted to him on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and stated:

'We the undersigned are wholly opposed to the proposed introduction by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service of reduced crewing levels and the increased risk to our Health, Safety and Welfare as a result of only four riders on front line appliances'

Given the phrasing of the petition during validation signatures were discounted from support staff (3) and 1 signature from an individual from another service. There were also 5 duplicated entries. Therefore there were 364 validated signatures and the petition was presented to the Chair by the FBU's Branch Secretary at this point in the meeting.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- [1] the Authority acknowledge receipt of the Petition.**

**2 2014-15 DRAFT BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

Cheshire Fire Authority was required to approve its budget and set the Council Tax precept for the year commencing 1 April 2014. In determining a budget that it considered reasonable, the Authority was required to have regard to all relevant factors, including the likely impact of policy options on the achievement of the Service's objectives and the uncertainty associated with the economic scenario.

The Head of Finance presented the report which sought Members approval for the Authority's budget for 2014-15, the Council Tax precept level for 2014-15 and its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2014-15 to 2017-18. This

was the final budget report of three; the first was considered by the Fire Authority on 11 December 2013 and the second by Policy Committee on 29 January 2014. Members had also met to develop the Authority's financial plans during Planning Days in July and November 2013 and most recently in January this year.

The report asked Members to consider two budget proposals:

- a) Accepting the Council Tax Freeze Grant; or
- b) Rejecting the Council Tax Freeze Grant and increasing the precept by 1.99%.

The two budget proposals were detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the report. Appendices 1 and 2 of the report presented the MTFP modelled on the effect of existing assumptions and showed how the Authority would produce a balanced budget in 2014-15 based on the two budget proposals; if it accepted Council Tax Freeze Grant (Appendix 1); or if it rejected the Council Tax Freeze Grant and increased the precept by 1.99% (Appendix 2).

The Head of Finance presented the report and provided an overview of the main areas of the report as follows:

- Cheshire Fire Authority Budget for 2014-2015;
- The Comprehensive Spending Review and National Context;
- Medium Term Financial Plan covering the period up to and including 2017-18;
- Revenue Growth proposals;
- Savings;
- Funding of Cheshire Fire Authority;
- Capital Programme;
- Budget Consultation;
- Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves;
- Financial Health Targets;
- Prudential Code;
- Summary Budget Proposals 2014-15;
- Impact Assessments;
- Conclusion.

Members discussed the information provided in respect of the budget proposals for 2014-15 and a number of queries were raised.

A Member asked officers to clarify that, if Members approved the budget which included the funding for the Safety Centre, this would not mean that Members had committed to the proposal for a Safety Centre. The Head of Finance explained that approval of the Safety Centre proposal was the subject of a separate report later on the agenda. If Members did not approve the Safety Centre after considering this, then the 2014-15 revenue budget would not be changed, but rather the £82k in the budget for set up costs at

the Safety Centre would be re-designated as a transfer to IRMP reserves. In addition, the £3.9m in the 2014-15 capital programme in relation to the Safety Centre would be removed and an equivalent amount of funding from prudential borrowing would also be removed.

Councillor Carey, Member Champion for Finance thanked the Head of Finance for his comprehensive report and proposed that recommendations [2] to [8] be moved on block and also proposed that in respect of recommendation [1] Proposal 2 - increase the Council Tax precept by 1.99% (as set out in table 1) be approved. He commented that this would mean an average increase (on a band D property) of £1.34 per annum on households and that the impact on the public would be minimal. However this would provide guaranteed additional revenue of around £200k for the Authority and would reduce the savings required in the MTFP by £438k. The Authority needed to take a longer term view and this option provided greater certainty in the MTFP. A Member seconded this proposal and commented there was both public and staff support for this proposal.

A Member stated that this was a decision for the future and the 1.99% precept would provide the best investment for the future.

Councillor Merry, Member Champion for Finance informed Members that the Authority should consider the option to take up the Council Tax Freeze Grant. There was a concern about the Authority's image and the public perception if the precept increased again when there was a grant on offer that would be baselined. Also there was concern expressed over the message an increase in precept sent to Government and that future capital grant allocations could be affected. She explained that she supported Councillor Carey's proposal to agree recommendations [2] to [8] in the report, however she proposed that, in respect of recommendation [1], the Authority agree to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2014-15 which was set out as Proposal 1 in Table 1 in the report. A Member seconded this proposal and commented that Authority Members were appointed to run an excellent Fire Authority but also to represent the residents of Cheshire. She commented that it felt morally right to take the grant.

A Member stated that the Authority was well managed and felt that the precept should not be increased in the current economic climate. He added that the difference in the two options was only a small amount against the Authority's budget. Also if the Authority decided to go ahead with the Safety Centre proposal this would require a large amount of capital and revenue funding and a decision to increase the precept would send a mixed message to residents.

Councillor Carey concluded that Members had expressed their views and that two alternatives had been proposed and seconded in respect of the 2014-15 budget. Members were asked to vote on the two proposals. The proposal to increase the Council Tax precept by 1.99% was carried with 13

Members voting in support of the increase. 9 Members voted in support of accepting the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

The Chair concluded this item by recording his thanks to the two Member Champions for their time and effort in analysing the budget proposals and presenting the options available. He also thanked the Head of Finance and his team for all their hard work in preparing such a detailed report.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] **a) the 2014-15 budget, as set out in Proposal 2 (Increase in precept of 1.99%) in Table 1 of the report, be approved;**  
**b) the precepts on the collection funds for 2014-15 as set out in Proposal 2 in Table 2 of the report be agreed (Council Tax for 2014-15 for a Band D equivalent property be set at £69.09);**  
**c) the Medium Term Financial Plan, as set out in Appendix 2, covering the period up to and including 2017-18 be approved;**
- [2] **the Revenue Growth proposals for 2014-15, as set out in Appendix 3, be approved;**
- [3] **the Savings proposals for 2014-15, as set out in Appendix 4, be approved;**
- [4] **the 2014-15 Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 5, and the items shown as part of the anticipated Capital Programme for 2015-16, also set out in Appendix 5, be approved;**
- [5] **the Strategy for Managing Reserves, as set out in Appendix 6, be approved;**
- [6] **the Reserves Risk Assessment, as set out in Appendix 7, and the Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves (paragraphs 32-46 of the report) be noted;**
- [7] **the Authority adopt the suite of Financial Health Indicators, as set out in paragraph 47 of the report; and**
- [8] **The Prudential Indicators for the years 2014-15 to 2016-17, as set out in Appendix 8, be approved and that the Head of Finance be authorised to alter the mix of borrowing and other long term liabilities within the authorised limit and operational boundary.**

### 3 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-15 (IRMP 11)

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications presented the report which sought Members' approval to publish the Authority's annual action plan for 2014-15 (IRMP11) following the conclusion of a formal 12 week consultation programme.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications presented an overview of the consultation programme and outcomes. He explained that the programme focused on a standard consultation survey highlighting key proposals in the draft IRMP with residents encouraged to respond using the printed forms distributed at the community roadshows or electronically via the website. Staff and partners were able to respond via the online survey available on both the intranet and website. A total of 582 members of the public, 133 members of staff and 17 partner organisations responded which meant that the Authority could be confident that the responses were an accurate reflection of public opinion, producing a confidence interval of +/- 5%.

The quantitative survey comprised 11 questions about the Service in general and the proposals for 2014-15. The headline results included:

- **Satisfaction** - The vast majority of residents (98%) and stakeholders (90%) valued Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service as a local service provider or partner organisation;
- **IRMP 11** - 75.3% of residents, 46.4% of staff and 50% of stakeholders supported the overall plans set out in the draft annual action plan for 2014-15;
- **Council Tax** - 45.8% of residents, 62.4% of staff and 27.3% of stakeholders would support the Fire Authority increasing its council tax level by 1.99%;
- **Smoke alarm campaign** - there was overwhelming support for the Service's campaign to make it a requirement for private landlords to install smoke detectors in their properties;
- **Automatic fire alarms** - the majority of residents (68.5%) supported the new policy of not attending Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) during office hours unless there is a phone call confirming a fire – with the exception of premises such as hospitals. There were similar levels of support (48.1%) and opposition (43.5%) to the proposal from staff.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications informed Members that the two issues that attracted the most controversy were the proposed safety centre and the project to offer a paid for home safety assessment service to low risk households. He explained that the Safety Centre proposal was the subject of a separate report on the agenda and asked Members to note that there was strong public support for the proposal with 76.5% in

favour. However, there was greater opposition from staff with 44.3% opposing the proposal. The latest draft IRMP, supplied with the agenda, assumed that the Safety Centre project would be approved and it was noted that an update may be required after the meeting to reflect the decisions made on the Safety Centre report.

The other issue that had received more opposition than support was in relation to the proposal to offer a paid for home safety assessment service to low risk households and there was also concern expressed about the amount of the possible charge. In light of these responses this proposal had been amended to indicate that no further progress be made by the Authority unless a separate business case was approved.

Consultation with representative bodies had also been held. Members had received a copy of the formal response from the Fire Brigade's Union who had also attended the Members planning day to present their response to Members. No formal responses had been received from Unison or the Fire Officers' Association.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications informed Members that the latest copy of the IRMP, which had been distributed with the agenda, had been updated in a number of areas from the draft version that had been approved for consultation. The information had been updated and amended to reflect the outcomes of discussions at senior management meetings and Member Planning Days and to balance the outcomes of consultation feedback against the Authority's future budget challenges. Financial information and the Medium Term Financial Plan had now been included, however these sections would be updated to reflect the decisions made on the budget at the meeting.

The summary on page 21 of IRMP11 had been updated to reflect the latest position on a number of draft projects including the outcomes of an evaluation of the former Redsands Children's Centre in Willaston, Crewe which highlighted that it did not currently meet the Service's risk and operational criteria for a new fire station. It was noted, however, that this did not mean that discussions on co-location at the site would not continue.

A Member queried whether any response had been received from the FBU in relation to a request made at the recent Members Planning Day for a formal response from them on where the required savings could be found if the proposal for revised crewing arrangements were not implemented. The Chief Fire Officer commented that this request had been raised at the Service's Joint Consultation and Negotiation Panel meeting and a response from the FBU was awaited.

A Member stated that the IRMP consultation in relation to the Safety Centre did not give any further details such as costs and felt that the public may have responded differently if costs had been provided. Staff were more likely to have an awareness of the costs and the responses from them reflected this. A

Member added that the IRMP document stated that the Safety Centre was for young people and that this should be amended to include all age groups as discussed at the Members Planning Day.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications explained that the consultation reflected the position in September 2013 and the Safety Centre proposal had evolved considerably since then. The principle in respect of building the centre for young people had also expanded and this would be explored further in the next item on the agenda.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the feedback received from the consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (IRMP 11) be noted;**
- [2] the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (IRMP 11) be approved for publication by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 subject to appropriate updates required to reflect the decisions taken on Agenda Item 2 – Draft Budget 2014-15 and Item 4 – Lymm Safety Centre; and**
- [3] the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to make any final drafting changes to the publication, including updated performance data.**

**4 LYMM SAFETY CENTRE**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) introduced this report which provided details of the proposal to build a Safety Centre at Lymm. He explained that the report complemented the business case that was attached to the report to allow Members to fully consider the proposal and make a decision about whether to proceed with building and running a safety centre at Lymm. The report included additional information which Members had requested at their Planning Day on 17 January 2014.

The DCFO confirmed that, following the discussions with Members and the development of the Safety Centre concept the emphasis of the usage of the centre had been expanded and the potential to include elements within the centre that might benefit older people or other vulnerable groups through engagement with their carers was being explored.

The DCFO provided a summary of the content of the report and Business Case and highlighted the following areas:

- Location – Travel Times
- Usage of Existing Safety Centres – Sustainability of Concept
- Effectiveness
- Timing
- Design
- Costs

Members discussed the proposals and a number of views were expressed and comments/queries raised as follows:

A Member stated that he had considered the proposal and welcomed the option to widen the scope of the Safety Centre from young people to all vulnerable groups. He also commented that he welcomed the reference to pursuing support and sponsorship from businesses. However he felt that, although the idea should not be dismissed, he was unable to support the recommendation to proceed at the present time.

A Member commented that there appeared to be an assumption that it would only be schools in deprived areas that would require assistance with travel costs, however, this should be extended to all schools. She also commented that the coverage of the site should be from 'cradle to grave' and that formal commitment should be obtained from partners before a final decision was made.

A number of Members re-iterated the view that this was an excellent and exciting project and fits in with the Authority's ethos as a leading Service but there were real issues with the long-term running costs in the current economic climate and there was a need for other funding sources to be found and partners to commit to the project before the Authority proceeded.

A Member commented that he fully supported the proposal and that if the Fire Authority did not 'kick start' the project then he did not believe it would be delivered. A Member drew attention to the information provided on the evidence that supported the concept and approach on immersive learning and commented that the impact on the community was the most important element of the project. He stated that the Authority should look at the wider consequences of not doing this and, although there were risks, this was an opportunity that should be taken.

The Chair asked Members to refer to the recommendations which provided details of further work that would be undertaken by the Service to secure value for money in the development of the building, to extend the safety centre's provision to benefit older people and other vulnerable groups and also to explore all avenues for both capital and revenue funding for the safety centre.

A Member wished to make a statement in respect of the proposal. He thanked the DCFO and his team for the excellent report that had been presented which was very open and honest. However he still had misgivings regarding the project and was not satisfied with some of the detail provided. He also commented that it was too early to agree to proceed with the running of a safety centre at Lymm and felt that more time was required to explore and resolve some of the issues. He drew attention to the IRMP consultation outcomes which he felt did not add any value as the costs involved had not been consulted on. He also stated that it would be a two hour return journey

for schools in South Cheshire which would be costly and felt that the location of the Safety Centre should be Winsford. He felt that there had been no firm evidence presented that this project would save lives and commented that it would be useful to look at the road traffic accidents before and after the operating Safety Centres were opened. He questioned whether this was the right time to be spending money on such a project when firefighters were being asked to reduce crewing levels and also questioned whether £0.5m extra for the building design was value for money. The proposed design could also make future re-use or re-sale of the building more difficult. He re-iterated other Members' concerns over having formal commitment from partners before agreeing to proceed and concluded by stating that his key concern was the on-going revenue costs and the £200k capital/loan charges that would be impacted by any changes to interest rates.

A proposal to remove recommendation 1 and amend recommendation 2 to 'That Members confirm that they wish to continue with the potential development and running of a safety centre at Lymm' was moved and seconded. 10 Members voted for the amendment and 12 Members voted against.

The original recommendations contained within the report were then moved and seconded with 12 Members voting for and 10 Members voting against.

**RESOLVED: That Members confirmed that:**

- [1] They are satisfied that the business case attached as Appendix 1 to the report is sufficiently developed and robust to enable them to make a decision;**
- [2] They wish to proceed with the development and running of a safety centre at Lymm;**
- [3] Whilst authorising officers to pursue planning permission for the combined operational hub and safety centre, they expect officers to robustly challenge the approach to the development of the building in order to secure value for money;**
- [4] In principle they wish to see further work in relation to extending the safety centre's education provision to benefit older people and other vulnerable groups;**
- [5] They wish officers to explore all avenues for funding (both capital and revenue) for the safety centre, including the potential of setting up a separate legal entity to own and run the undertaking.**

## 5 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PRACTICES 2014-15

The report of the Head of Finance sought Members approval for the Fire Authority's Treasury Management Strategy and Practices for the year 2014-15. This was a requirement of guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government in April 2010 and the 2009 CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The Treasury Management Strategy comprised of two main elements; Treasury Management – Borrowing and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy and the Treasury Management - Annual Investment Strategy. It was proposed that the Authority continued to set the Minimum Revenue Provision at 6.7% of the opening Capital Financing Requirement, which was considered to be a prudent and sustainable approach. The Authority's approach to Treasury risk management and Treasury management practices was also detailed in the report.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for the year 2014-2015 be approved; and**
- [2] the Authority's approach to Treasury Risk Management and its Treasury Management Practices be approved.**

## 6 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced this report which sought Members approval to publish the Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2014-15. As a result of the Localism Act 2012 all local authorities were mandated to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement which set out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers, its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the pay of Chief Officers and that of other employees. The Pay Policy Statement must be published by 31<sup>st</sup> March immediately preceding the financial year to which it related.

The report provided details of the Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2014-15 and the draft Statement was attached to the report for Members approval. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services drew Members attention to the information on the Authority's policy in relation to re-engagement and explained that this was a simplification of the Authority's revised policy which would be submitted to a future Member meeting for approval.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2014/15, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved for publication.**

## 7 REVIEW OF INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Head of Finance introduced this report which proposed an alternative way of covering the Authority's insurance risk and sought Members approval to pursue these alternative arrangements as outlined in the report.

The Head of Finance summarised the content of the report which covered the Authority's current insurance arrangements and costs, provided information on the market conditions and details of the alternative pooling arrangement that was being considered. He drew Members attention to the table in the report which illustrated the financial modelling for an Insurance Pool. The benefits and risks were also covered together with the viability, legal implications and timing.

A Member queried who the other members of the proposed pooling arrangements were and asked whether they would have similar risks as Cheshire. The Head of Finance explained that the pooling entity would comprise of members of the Fire and Rescue Insurance Consortium (FRIC) and there were eight other Fire and Rescue Authority members all of which would have comparable risk profiles. A Member commented that Cheshire County Council had used a similar arrangement which had worked very well and he supported this proposal.

**RESOLVED: That Members agree that the Authority should:**

- [1] Participate in a pooling arrangement as part of its insurance portfolio;**
- [2] Utilise a pooling arrangement for its corporate property, liability, motor and other miscellaneous insurance requirements for a minimum of three years through a pooling entity (with the intention of this being in place from 1 November 2014);**
- [3] Become a full member of a pooling entity (a company limited by guarantee), formed by Fire and Rescue Insurance Consortium (FRIC) managers which will be used to manage the pool, and to authorise the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to take all necessary steps to achieve this, provided that they are satisfied with the legal documentation (which must adequately describe the obligations, liabilities and risks as well as governance arrangements associated with the pooling entity); and**
- [4] Participate in a financial guarantee for supplementary payments should claims against the pool exceed the funding available and authorise the Head of Finance to take all necessary steps to achieve this.**

## 8 PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME

The Head of Community Fire Protection introduced the report which provided details of the introduction of the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) and the implications for the Service. Member approval to the suggested approach that the Authority should adopt in relation to PAS was sought.

The Head of Community Fire Protection outlined the Authority's approach to PAS and summarised the potential legal issues that might arise out of the PAS as it did significantly change the present structure of enforcement by fire and rescue authorities.

A Member queried whether the Service would have to train Officers to ensure they had the requisite level of competency to fulfil the role required. The Head of Community Fire Protection responded that a number of officers had the required level of competency, however, there was uncertainty regarding the amount of work the changes would generate and training could become an issue in future.

A Member queried whether the Authority would be consulted if the Service intended to create a partnership with a company. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured Members that each partnership would be submitted to the Fire Authority for consideration prior to any commitment to a partnership.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the information about the Primary Authority Scheme in relation to fire and rescue authorities and the implications of the Primary Authority Scheme for the Service be noted;**
- [2] the suggested approach to the Primary Authority Scheme, as detailed in the report, whereby Officers are authorised to pursue partnerships in circumstances where a satisfactory assessment of the impact upon the other work of the Service has been completed be approved; and**
- [3] proposed partnerships would be submitted to the Fire Authority, for consideration, prior to commitment.**

## 9 REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Members had received this report which provided details of the final recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel following a series of meetings held to review the current Members' Allowance Scheme. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and Members were asked to consider the final recommendations of the panel, attached as Appendix 1 of the report.

A Member highlighted the recommendation in respect of consideration of a term of office for Independent (non-elected) Members and commented that she supported this recommendation. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services responded that, if Members accepted the recommendations, the proposal for a term of office for Independent Members would be reviewed in more detail.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Members' Allowances as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be accepted and implemented as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014;**
- [2] the revised Members' Allowance Scheme for 2014-15, attached at Appendix 2, be approved; and**
- [3] it be noted that the next comprehensive review of the Members' Allowance Scheme is scheduled for 2016-17, subject to any significant changes to the current structure prior to this date.**

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

**RESOLVED:**

**That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business listed below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraph indicated:**

**Paragraph**

- (1) Information relating to any individual
- (3) Information relating to the financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

11 **DECISION RELATING TO THE SETTLEMENT OF AN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL CLAIM**

This item was submitted to the Fire Authority, for information, in accordance with paragraphs 3.84 to 3.86 of the Constitution – Urgent Business to be determined between Fire Authority meetings.