



MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Friday 3 April, 2009 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D Bateman, M Biggin, P Booher, J Crockatt, B Crowe, R I Fletcher, E Johnson, J Joyce, B Livesley, H Mundry, G Merry, K Musgrave, A Needham, S Nelson, C Oliver, R K Polhill, L Redhead, M Simon, G Smith, C Thorley, D Topping, J Weatherill and N Wright.

Also in attendance: M Bryam, N M Dolphin, A W Hooton, B Jones, E Moore Dutton and S Roberts.

APOLOGIES: D W Freear, P Byrne, S Mosley and D Andrews.

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Election of a Chair

Deputy Chief Officer K Foreman asked for nominations from Members for the position of Chair. Councillors J Joyce and D Topping were nominated. Members requested, before the ballot was conducted the nominated Members gave a speech identifying the reasons for which they should be elected. Following speeches by the prospective candidates a secret ballot was conducted and votes counted. Councillor D Topping was duly elected Chair of the Fire Authority.

Having been elected Councillor D Topping was presented with the Chain of Office by Tony Hooton the previous Chair of the Fire Authority. The newly appointed Chairman Councillor D Topping gave thanks to Members for electing him as Chair of the Authority. The Chairman outlined the objectives of the Fire Authority and acknowledged that future success would be challenging and to achieve its goals the Authority needed to apply the skills of teamwork, respect and work with the knowledge and experience of those Members continuing their service.

Election of Vice Chair

Chairman Councillor D Topping asked for nominations from Members for the position of Vice-Chair. Councillors J Joyce and G Smith were nominated. A ballot was conducted and votes counted. Councillor G Smith was duly elected Vice-Chair.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] Councillor David Topping be elected as Chair of the Fire Authority until June 2010;
- [2] Councillor Graham Smith be elected as Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority until June 2010;
- [3] the appointment of Councillors L Redhead and J Joyce as Party Spokespersons for the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively, be noted;
- [4] the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 11 February, 2009 be confirmed as a correct record;
- [5] the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 11 March, 2009 be received;
- [6] the minutes of the Standards Committee held on 18 March, 2009 be received;
- [7] the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 25 March, 2009 be received subject to the following amendment;
 - (i) it be noted that Councillor Fletcher was present at the meeting.

2 NEW AUTHORITY STRUCTURE AND MEMBER TRAINING

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented a New Authority Structure and Member Training Report. The report outlined the importance of ensuring the structure of the Authority and its sub-committees and groups were fit for purpose in view of the East Cheshire and West Cheshire Authority changes on 1 April 2009. This was particularly important in relation to the local structures established to support the Unitary Performance Management areas. Additionally, the report sought to put in place an induction training programme to cover the first twelve months of the newly expanded Authority.

The proposed political proportionalities for each Committee of the new Fire Authority based on the increased membership of 23 elected members were detailed in the report.

The report also sought to re-launch the buddying system to aid and support the new Members.

The following comments were noted:

Local Support/Unitary Performance Areas

The proposals detailed in the report in respect of Unitary Performance Areas were discussed together with an amended recommendation tabled at the meeting. It was noted that further debate would be needed in relation to the proposals and it was proposed that a further report be brought to the Fire Authority meeting in June 2009.

Members Allowance Scheme

Membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel previously derived from three remuneration panels aligned to Halton Borough Council, Warrington Borough Council and Cheshire County Council. The latter authority had now been dissolved and accordingly, new Members of the Panel would have to be recruited from the structures established by the new Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester Councils. It was proposed that, in the interim, Members retained the current scheme and recommendations in respect of a reviewed scheme would be submitted to Members in June 2009 following the reconstitution of the Remuneration Panel.

Training Programme and Induction

As Members were required to undertake training as part of their roles on the East and West Cheshire Authorities it was felt that the training programme needed to reflect this and focus primarily on their roles in the Fire Authority. As an initial step and to promote an understanding of the work of and issues facing Cheshire Fire Authority, a standard induction seminar for all Members of the CFA would be arranged.

To ensure commitment to and excellence in Member development the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service needed to rejoin the North West Charter for Member development, Members were asked to support this proposal.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the membership of the Fire Authority, Committees, Sub-Committees and other bodies for 2009/10, as confirmed in the membership list (Attached as Annex 1) be approved;
- [2] the proposals for supporting the Unitary Performance Areas be deferred until the June meeting of the Authority where a business case and options can be presented;
- [3] the financial framework for the unitary budget be deferred until the June meeting of the Authority;
- [4] the proposed re-introduction of the buddying arrangements (between Members and Senior Officers) be approved;

- [5] the application for re-accreditation of Cheshire Fire Authority into the North West Charter for elected member development be supported;
- [6] the alignment of Member engagement against the Service's business model be deferred until the June meeting of the Authority;
- [7] the continuation of the existing Members Allowances Scheme be agreed, in the interim period, to the meeting of the Authority on 10 June 2009;
- [8] a report be presented to the June meeting of the Authority to consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a revised allowances scheme;
- [9] proposals to give members greater oversight of Business Continuity arrangements be presented at the June meeting of the Authority; and
- [10] the initial induction and training programme, as outlined in the report be agreed, with a substantive programme and timetable for training presented to the Authority in June.

3 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no issues to be considered under urgent business.