



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday 8 June, 2011 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D Brickhill, P Campbell, B Crowe, R I Fletcher, E Johnson, J Joyce, J Kerr-Brown, J Leather, B Livesley, G Merry, H Mundry, K Musgrave, S Nelson, R K Polhill, L Redhead, B Rudd, T Sherlock, M Simon, A Tate, C Thorley, D Topping and J Weatherill.

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Biggin

B ELECTION OF CHAIR

In accordance with Standing Order no 3.20 Members were invited to elect a Chair of the Authority to serve until the Annual Meeting in 2012.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services asked for nominations from Members for the position of Chair. Councillors J Joyce and D Topping were nominated. Before a secret ballot was conducted the nominated Members made short statements. Councillor D Topping was duly elected Chair of the Fire Authority with 13 votes, giving him more than half of the votes cast.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Topping be elected as Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in 2012.

MINUTES SILENCE

At this point the Chair said a few words and asked the Authority to stand for a minutes silence in memory of Terri Marsland, who had recently passed away. Terri had been the Chair of the Authority's Independent Remuneration Panel since 2004 and had a long and distinguished career with much of her work focussing on supporting working people, particularly working women.

K CONSTITUTION

At the introduction of procedural matter C, Election of Vice Chair there was a proposal to bring forward procedural matter K, Constitution with a view to making changes to allow the appointment of three Vice-Chairs (one to represent each constituent authority that does not benefit from being represented by having one of its Members in the Chair).

After a short debate about the proposal it was agreed that there was a need to receive a report dealing with the implications (both constitutional and financial) and the Head of Legal and Democratic Service agreed to submit a report to the next meeting of the Fire Authority.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services asked Members to re-adopt the current constitution at this point before returning to procedural matter C.

RESOLVED:

That the Fire Authority's Constitution be re-adopted.

C ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

In accordance with Standing Order no 3.21 the Chair invited Members to elect a Vice-Chair of the Authority to serve until the Annual Meeting in 2012.

Councillors J Joyce and B Crowe were nominated. A secret ballot was conducted and Councillor J Joyce was duly elected Vice-Chair with 12 votes, giving him more than half the votes cast.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor John Joyce be elected as Vice-Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in 2012.

D APPOINTMENT OF GROUP SPOKESPERSONS

In accordance with Standing Order No 3.24, a party group not represented by one of the office-holders (Chair or Vice-Chair), was entitled to appoint a spokesperson to represent that party group for 2011/12.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of Councillor L Redhead as Party Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrat Group be noted.

E CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Authority 2011/12

The Chair provided an update on the changes to the membership of the Fire Authority following the local elections on 5th May and welcomed six new Members on to the Authority for 2011/12.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Eleanor Johnson on being elected Lord Mayor of Chester and Councillor Mike Biggin on being elected Mayor of Warrington.

Exercise Avonmouth – Grey Water Exercise 21 May 2011

The Chair reported that Bravo Watch, Congleton had participated in the national High Volume Pump exercise at Avonmouth Docks on 21st May 2011. He highlighted the quote provided by one of the crew members that attended the exercise which provided evidence of the investment Members had approved.. 'It's only when you come to an exercise such as this that you have a real appreciation of how much has been invested in our own equipment and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) in Cheshire and have an awareness of our own professionalism and practical skills'

Achievements

The Chair announced that the Service had received a second prestigious award just weeks after being named 'Fire Service of the Year' at the Emergency Service Awards. The Service won Best Partnership project at the Fire Service Excellence Awards 2011. The project titled 'Springboard' related to the Service's work with older people in partnership with Age UK Cheshire.

External Meetings/Events Attended

The Chair had attended several events during May and June including the Firefighter Memorial Trust's Annual Service of Thanksgiving on 8th May 2011. He commented that Cheshire Safety Day on 1 June 2011 had been an outstanding success with an incredible 1,125 Home Safety Assessments being delivered together with engagement with almost 300 road users. The Chair thanked both Officers and Members who had participated in the event.

Forthcoming Events

A list of forthcoming events was provided for Members which included Princes Trust Presentation evenings and Station Open Days. Members were reminded that a Members Awayday Event would take place over 2 days on 23rd and 24th June 2011.

F DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Members interests.

G MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cheshire Fire Authority held on 13 April 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

H MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY, COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and checked that Members had received Appendix 2A which had been marked to follow on the agenda and was sent out separately. He asked Members to deal with recommendations [1], [2], [5] and [10], which were all essentially factual matters to note.

He then went on to ask Members if they understood and accepted the approach that he had adopted and calculations he had made in relation to proportionality. He asked Members to agree recommendation [3] at this point.

This left Members to conclude the appointments /allocations covered by recommendations [4], [6], [7], [8] and [9]. An adjournment was agreed and the Chair, Vice Chair and Liberal Democrat Group Spokesperson made the necessary appointments/allocations and arranged for the production of the two documents (the final versions of which are now attached to these minutes and identified as Annexes A & B) which were distributed to all Members before the balance of the recommendations were taken in order.

RESOLVED: That:

- [1] appointments to the Fire Authority and its functions as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted;**
- [2] political proportions on the Fire Authority be noted;**
- [3] approach to the allocation of seats as detailed in Appendix 2A of the report be agreed;**
- [4] appointments to Committees Sub-Committees and Groups be agreed (see attached Annex 1);**
- [5] functions of Committees, Sub-Committees and Groups as set out in Appendix 2B of the report be agreed;**

- [6] continued appointment of the independent members of Standards Committee, Performance and Overview Committee and the Member Training and Development Group be agreed (see attached Annex 1);
- [7] appointments to outside bodies be agreed (see attached Annex 2);
- [8] appointments of Member Champions be agreed (see attached Annex 2);
- [9] continuation of the Member/Officer buddying arrangements be agreed; and
- [10] Members allowances associated with the various allocations/ appointments be noted.

I TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2011-12

RESOLVED:

That the Timetable of Meetings for 2011-12 be noted.

J LGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE – 28th -30th JUNE 2011

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the following Members would be representing the Fire Authority at the LGA Annual Conference in June 2011:

Councillor Topping (Chair)

Councillor Joyce (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Redhead (Liberal Democrat Spokesperson)

2 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2010/11

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented the Service's Performance Report for 2010/11 to Members for approval. The Performance Report 2010-11 provided commentary on departmental and corporate progress against key objectives.

The CFO provided a summary of the key areas of the report. He highlighted that performance against key indicators was generally positive with notable issues highlighted in the report. One of the key issues highlighted was the rise in the number of fire deaths during 2010/11, which was in line with the national trend. It was noted that this key area of work would be submitted to the Performance and Overview Committee for further scrutiny.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning provided a summary of the financial performance for 2010/11. He explained that the latest estimated outturn position indicated a year-end underspend against Authority budgets of

£311,000. At the mid-year review, Members had noted a forecast Service underspend of £326k and ring-fenced this amount for investment in the ICT infrastructure. The year-end report identified that a further £460k of Service underspend was now expected. He asked Members to note that both the Authority and Service outturn figures were estimates at this stage as the draft accounts had not yet been formally approved and would be presented to the Closure of Accounts Committee at the end of June.

Members were asked to note that options for the utilisation of the final year-end underspend would be brought to the September meeting of the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Performance Report 2010/11 be approved; and**
- [2] a report be submitted to a future Performance and Overview Committee in respect of the rise in fatalities due to primary fires.**

3 ICT INFRASTRUCTURE REFORM

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced the report which detailed the Service's ICT Infrastructure Reform proposals. He outlined the issues identified, the immediate remedial actions that had been implemented, the current situation and the proposal for creating an ICT Infrastructure that fully supported organisational objectives. The Head of ICT provided a presentation to Members which illustrated the current work being undertaken and the further upgrades that were required.

There were three distinct work streams identified and the Assistant Chief Fire Officer outlined the content of the work streams for Members. The ICT Steering Group would oversee the project and regular updates on the progress of the project would be submitted to the Performance and Overview Committee for scrutiny. A final report would be submitted to the Fire Authority once the project was completed.

Members attention was drawn to the financial implications of the report which outlined the capital investment and revenue costs required to implement the reform proposals.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the issues and remedial actions be noted:**
- [2] the three stream approach to ICT reform be noted;**
- [3] the funding to upgrade the infrastructure (Appendix 3 of the report) be approved;**

- [4] the Performance and Overview Committee monitor the project going forward; and**
- [5] a report be brought back to the Fire Authority at the end of the project.**

PART 2 – BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE

NONE

Annex 1

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FOR 2011-12

There are 23 elected Members of Cheshire Fire Authority drawn from the four unitary authorities of Cheshire East (8), Cheshire West and Chester (7), Halton (3) and Warrington (5).

FIRE AUTHORITY – 23 Members – Con:Lab:Lib:Ind (10:9:3:1)

Chair: D Topping
Vice Chair: J Joyce

Representing Cheshire East Council (5:1:1:1)

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Independent
B Livesley G Merry M J Simon D Topping J Wetherill	C Thorley	R Fletcher	D Brickhill

Representing Cheshire West and Chester Council (4:3:0)

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
B Crowe E Johnson K Musgrave J Leather	T Sherlock A Tate B Rudd	

Representing Halton Borough Council (0:2:1)

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
	R K Polhill S J Nelson	Mrs L Redhead

Representing Warrington Borough Council (1:3:1)

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
P Campbell	J Joyce H Mundry J Kerr Brown	M Biggin

Annex 1

BODIES COVERED BY POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY RULES

POLICY COMMITTEE – 10 Members

The Policy Committee acts on behalf of the Authority and has significant delegated powers to take decisions or advise in relation to developing, monitoring and reviewing the Authority's policies, Budget, IRMP, Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy and the overall allocation of resources following consultation with the Committees and Members of the Authority. The Committee meets five times a year.

The Membership of the Committee must include the Fire Authority Chair and Vice Chair who are appointed as Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy Committee.

Political proportions per calculation: (4:4:1 + 1 seat to be allocated)

Chair: D Topping

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
D Topping (C)	J Joyce	L Redhead	
G Merry	R Polhill	R Fletcher	
J Weatherill	T Sherlock		
B Crowe	C Thorley		

PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – 7 Members and 1 Independent Member

NB: Members must not be Members of Policy Committee

The role of the Performance and Overview Committee is to scrutinise decisions of the Policy Committee and Authority and to offer advice or make recommendations. The Committee undertakes general policy reviews with a cross-cutting approach and make recommendations to the Policy Committee to assist in the development of future policies and strategies. The Committee meets five times a year.

Political proportions per calculation: (3:3:1)

Chair: M Simon

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
M Simon	S Nelson	M Biggin	
J Leather	J Kerr-Brown		
K Musgrave	A Tate		
1 INDEPENDENT MEMBER			
M W Ravenscroft			

Annex 1

BRIGADE MANAGER'S PAY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 7 Members

This Committee meets twice a year and on an ad hoc basis as required, to undertake the appraisal of the Chief Fire Officer, to review the pay of the Chief, Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officers. The Committee also appoints a staffing sub-committee to act as an interview Panel for appointments to the senior management team (SMT).

It is the usual convention that the Committee includes the Fire Authority Chair, Vice Chair, and party spokespersons.

Political proportions per calculation: (3:3:1)

Chair: D Topping

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
D Topping	J Joyce	L Redhead	
B Livesley	R Polhill		
G Merry	B Rudd		

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (DISPUTE) – 4 Members

NB: Members must not be Members of Policy Committee

This Committee acts as the final level of appeal in cases in industrial dispute, both in relation to individual cases and failures to agree between the Service and the representative bodies. The Committee meets on an ad hoc basis, as required.

Political proportions per calculation: (2:2)

Chair: S Nelson

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
J Leather	S Nelson		
P Campbell	J Kerr-Brown		

Annex 1

BODIES NOT COVERED BY POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY RULES

STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 6 Members and 3 Independent Members

The Standards Committee is accountable to the Authority for the discharge of the Authority's functions under Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Committee promotes high standards of ethical behaviour by developing, maintaining and monitoring codes of Conduct for Members of the Authority (including Co-opted Members and other persons acting in a similar capacity) and for employees in accordance with best practice and Government guidance. The Committee meets five times a year.

Chair: W Ravenscroft

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
J Leather	H Mundry	M Biggin	D Brickhill
B Crowe	B Rudd		
3 INDEPENDENT MEMBERS			
Mr W Ravenscroft			
M R Garner			
Mr M McBride			

MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 4 Members and 1 Independent Member

This Committee meets four times a year. The Group oversees the Member training programme and co-ordinates training needs and events. The usual convention is that this is a cross-party group.

Chair: B Livesley

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
B Livesley	A Tate	R Fletcher	
P Campbell			
1 INDEPENDENT MEMBER			
M R Garner			

RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD – 2 Members

This Board meets twice a year to review the Corporate Risk Register aligned to the plans and activities of the Fire and Rescue Service.

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	
G Merry	C Thorley		

Annex 1

PHOENIX BOXING CLUB BOARD – 2 Members (from Warrington Members)

This Governance Board includes two elected Members to represent Cheshire Fire Authority (with two substitute Members). The main role of the Governance Board is to make decisions regarding the facilities and to promote and support the club. The Board will hold at least two general meetings a year.

It is understood that Councillors Campbell and Joyce have been put forward by Warrington Borough Council.

Members
J Joyce
P Campbell

BODIES WHERE NO APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED

CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The Policy Committee sits as the Closure of Accounts Committee and meets once a year to close the Authority's accounts.

STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE – 4 Members

The Staffing Sub-Committee consists of four Members drawn from the BMs Pay and Performance Committee and, wherever possible the sub-committee must be convened in political proportion.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY COMMITTEE

The membership of the Business Continuity Committee comprises the Chair, Vice Chair and Party Spokespersons. The Committee meets on an ad-hoc basis, as required.

Annex 2

OUTSIDE BODIES – INFORMATION
REGIONAL APPOINTMENTS – NORTH WEST

(A) NORTH WEST FIRE AND RESCUE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

This Board oversees a number of collaborative work-streams being undertaken by the five Fire and Rescue Services in the North West. Meetings are arranged by the regional secretariat and generally take place outside the Authority area. Meetings take place four times a year.

NB: 3 representatives only - previously Chair, Vice Chair and Leader of Main Opposition – now Chair, Vice Chair and other Group spokesperson

Members
Chair of Fire Authority – D Topping
Vice Chair of the Fire Authority – J Joyce
Group spokesperson – L Redhead

(B) LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROLLED COMPANY (LACC)

This company has been established through the Regional Management Board (now known as the Strategic Partnership Board) to oversee the establishment and operation of the Regional Control Centre (RCC).

NB: 2 representatives only

Members
E Johnson
J Joyce

REGIONAL APPOINTMENTS – OTHER

(C) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) - FIRE SERVICES FORUM

Every Fire Authority is entitled to representation on the Fire Services Forum and one Member from Cheshire (usually the Chair) is appointed to the Forum.

The Forum meets five times per year and is subject to the Constitution and Standing Orders of the LGA.

Member
Chair of Fire Authority – D Topping

(D) LGA RURAL AND URBAN COMMISSIONS

The Fire Authority makes appointments on an annual basis to these national Commissions, which meet roughly twice a year.

Rural Commission

Member
M Simon

Urban Commission

Member
C Thorley

Annex 2

(F) CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP (CDRP)

There is a CDRP for each of the four Unitary areas and each CDRP has statutory requirements to fulfil in respect of strategic assessments. The Fire Authority is represented by a Senior Officer on each CDRP and for Cheshire East CDRP one Cheshire East Fire Authority Member is also invited to attend.

Member
M Simon

(G) SUB-REGIONAL PUBLIC LEADERSHIP BOARD

The Board comprises the Leaders of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils. Halton Borough Council is an Associate Member. The Chairs of Cheshire Fire Authority and Cheshire Police Authority are also Members (without voting rights).

Member
Chair of the Fire Authority – D Topping

(H) LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

WEST CHESHIRE TOGETHER LSP

Cheshire West and Chester Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is the body that oversees the partnership work of a range of public and other organisations, across five thematic groups (Safer and Stronger, Environment, Health and Wellbeing etc).

The Fire and Rescue Service has been closely involved in the development of the Group and a number of officers attend the various thematic work-streams. The lead authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council, invited the Fire Authority to appoint an elected Member to sit on the governance board of the LSP to provide greater accountability. The Board meets on a quarterly basis.

Member
B Crowe

Annex 2

MEMBER CHAMPIONS

KEY MEMBER REPRESENTATION ON OTHER GROUPS – Non political – aligned to skills and interests

Equality and Diversity	S Nelson
Sits on Equality Task Group	
Environment	T Sherlock
Sits on Environment Project Board	
Health and Safety	D Topping
Sits on Health and Safety Committee	
Information and ICT	J Leather
Sits on ICT Steering Group	

ADDITIONAL MEMBER CHAMPIONS – Non political - aligned to skills and interests

Procurement	B Crowe
Finance	G Merry
Older People	R Fletcher
Young People	H Mundry
Performance Management	M Simon
Commercial/Business Risk Reduction	B Rudd
Industrial Relations (JCC Chair)	S Nelson
Road Safety	B Livesley