



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday 2 June, 2010 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.30 a.m.

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors P Booher and J Joyce

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors P Booher and J Joyce

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 2011.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor David Topping be elected as Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in 2011.

C ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

In accordance with Standing Order no 3.21 Members were invited to elect a Vice-Chair of the Authority to serve until the Annual Meeting in 2011.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Graham Smith be elected as Vice-Chair of Cheshire Fire Authority until the Annual Meeting in 2011.

D APPOINTMENT OF GROUP SPOKESPERSONS

In accordance with Standing Order No 3.24, where any party group was not represented by one of the office-holders (Chair or Vice-Chair), the representatives of the relevant party group were entitled to appoint a spokesperson to represent that party group for 2010/11.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments of Councillors J Joyce and L Redhead as Party Spokespersons for the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively, be noted.

E CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

General and Local Elections

The Chair provided an update on the changes to the political composition in Cheshire following this year's General Election and a full list of Cheshire MP's elected in May was provided.

Local elections had also been held in Warrington and Halton but there were no Fire Authority representatives up for election and changes to Fire Authority representation was unlikely.

The Chair congratulated Councillor Joyce on being elected Mayor of Warrington, Councillor Weatherill on being elected Mayor of Crewe and Councillor Merry on being elected Mayor of Sandbach. He also congratulated Councillor Polhill on becoming the Leader of the Council at Halton.

It was also noted that a new Fire Minister, Bob Neill had been appointed following the General Election.

Showcase Events – October 2010

Information on Showcase events being held in October 2010 was provided for Members. On 1st October the event being held would provide an opportunity to invite Chief Fire Officers from the surrounding Fire and Rescue Services to showcase our new Incident Command Training suite.

Cheshire MPs had received invitations to the new HQ on 15 October 2010 which would include a tour of the new build and Incident Command Training Suite. All Members would be invited to attend this event which would also include an opportunity for Members to discuss local issues with the Cheshire MP's.

The Chair added that there would also be a Sub-Regional Leadership Board meeting held at HQ in August which would provide the opportunity to showcase the new facilities to Cheshire Chief Executives and Leaders.

Amendment to the Timetable of Meetings for 2010/11

Following discussions with the Chief Fire Officer it was proposed that the Policy Committee which was scheduled to be held on 16 March 2011 would be changed to a full CFA meeting. This would ensure that all Members were fully involved with the final sign-off of next year's IRMP and that all Members would have ample opportunity to make their views on the final proposals known. This amendment was welcomed by Members.

Achievements

The Chair informed Members that he attended the 2010 LGA Group – Lgcommunications Reputation Awards on 27 May in Leeds. Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service were short-listed in two categories: Promoting the Reputation of the Authority (Council Reputation) and Promoting the Reputation of the Place (Partnership) but unfortunately were unsuccessful on this occasion. The Vice Chair had attended the International Safety Awards ceremony held at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London with the ACFO and the Health & Safety team who had been awarded an International Safety Award.

External Meetings/Events Attended

The Chair had attended several events during May including the Firefighter Memorial Trust's Annual Service of Thanksgiving on 9th May 2010, along with the Chief Fire Officer. He also represented Cheshire Fire Authority at the 'Total Place : After the Elections' event which was held in Central Hall, Westminster on 21st May 2010. The Chair provided feedback on the event and the emphasis that the new Government was placing on Local Government.

The Chair, along with the DCFO attended a Driver Engagement Event on 25th May and found it a very informative and worthwhile exercise. The County Coroner Nicholas Rheinberg was also in attendance. Members were encouraged to go along to observe the initiative at some stage during the year.

Forthcoming Events

A list of forthcoming events was provided for Members. It was noted that the LGA Annual Conference was being held in Bournemouth 6th -8th July 2010. The Chair, along with the Chief Fire Officer, Councillor Joyce and Councillor Oliver would be representing Cheshire Fire Authority at the Conference. The Chair and the Chief Fire Officer would also be attending a Memorial Service on 14 July 2010 at Winchester Cathedral for Firefighters Alan Bannon and James Shears.

Other dates for diaries:

A list of other forthcoming events was provided for Members and it was noted that the STAR Awards were taking place on Friday 25 June (not 24 June as stated).

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 14 April 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

H MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Performance & Overview Committee held on 7 April 2010 be received, for information.

I MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee held on 27 April 2010 be received, for information.

J MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY, COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND REGIONAL BODIES

Members were asked to confirm the membership of the Fire Authority, Committees, Sub-Committees and other bodies for 2010-11, a copy of the which was distributed at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the membership of the Fire Authority, Committees, Sub-Committees and other bodies for 2010/11, as confirmed in the membership list (attached as an Annex) be approved.

K APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members were asked to appoint or re-affirm the Fire Authority Members appointed to Outside Bodies as listed in Annex 5 of the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the list of Fire Authority Members appointed to Outside Bodies, as detailed in Annex 5 of the agenda, be approved for 2010/11.

L MEMBER-OFFICER BUDDYING ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED:

That the revised list of Member-Officer Buddy arrangements be received, for information.

M LGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE – 6TH JULY 2010

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the following Members would be representing the Fire Authority at the LGA Annual Conference in July 2010:

Councillor Topping (Chair)

Councillor Joyce (Labour Group Spokesperson)

Councillor Oliver (nominated as Liberal Democrat Representative)

2 CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE: UK ISAR

At its meeting on 10th February 2010 the Fire Authority approved the decision to discontinue with the Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) capability within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and to retain the international rescue capability known as United Kingdom International Search & Rescue (UK – ISAR).

The Head of Policy, Planning and Resilience presented a report which provided an overview of the local operating principles that had been developed for the Cheshire UK-ISAR team following the decision and Members were asked to agree the principles outlined in the report. The paper also outlined the position in respect of pension protection when operating overseas and it was noted that dialogue in respect of this issue with the CLG Pensions Department was on-going.

Members welcomed the proposals and supported the recommendations contained within the report.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the continuation of a Cheshire UK-ISAR team based upon the principles outlined in paragraph 31 of the report be approved;**
- [2] agreement to permit deployments whilst the pension and compensation arrangements continue to remain uncertain be granted; and**
- [3] an update paper be submitted to a future meeting of the Fire Authority if the risks identified are found to be the responsibility of the Fire Authority.**

3 EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Head of Corporate Communications presented a report which provided an overview of a new piece of legislation which had recently been given Royal Assent. It highlighted the key provisions within the Equality Act 2010 which would potentially impact on the Fire Authority and also the provisional timescales for implementation.

He explained that certain provisions within the Act were approved subject to Ministerial Order and therefore the timetable and implementation of these elements would be subject to the priorities of the new Government.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the information contained in the report be noted; and**

- [2] a further report be presented to the Fire Authority following clarification of national legislation to highlight the practical considerations that Cheshire Fire Authority will have to comply with.**

4 BUSINESS CASE FOR THE PURCHASE OF THREE NEW APPLIANCES IN 2010-11

The Director of Finance and Corporate Planning presented a report to Members which provided the business case for the purchase of three new appliances.

At its meeting held on 10 February 2010 the Fire Authority approved the 2010-11 Budget which provisionally allocated £642k of capital funding for the replacement of three appliances subject to a further paper being submitted by Officers during the year.

Due to uncertainties about the availability of build slots for the appliances, the approval was provisionally reserved for the 2011-12 financial year. This paper provided the business case for the funding to be brought forward into 2010-11.

Cheshire ordered and received three full size structural appliances during the latter part of 2009-10 and at the point of ordering those three appliances, the supplier was asked to provisionally allocate a further three additional build slots to their engineering schedule for the following year. This was done to ensure that Cheshire was in a position to receive priority over other UK Fire Authorities, should capital be made available during 2010-11. These slots could be relinquished at any point but this would mean that, effectively Cheshire would be put to the back of the queue for build slots which would mean that there would be no new appliances for approximately two years.

Members were made aware that in order to avoid a significant capital burden in future years, it was considered prudent to finance an on-going replacement programme (subject to any major financial pressures arising in any one year) and were asked to approve that the funding for the purchase of the three new fire appliances be brought forward to 2010/11 to ensure continuity in the replacement programme.

A Member queried the risk assessment produced on placing orders in the current economic climate where there was a risk of a company going out of business before the order was completed. The Director of Finance and Corporate Governance explained that payments on the order would be phased to minimise risks.

Members supported the paper and agreed that there should be a rolling programme for replacing vehicles.

Members also received a verbal update on the replacement of firekit and the timeline for rolling out the new kit to all Fire Fighters. A more detailed update on the project would be sent to Members.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the purchase of three new appliances at a cost of £642k in 2010-11 be approved; and**
- [2] the take-up of a loan to fund the purchase be approved and it be noted that the Authority will remain within all of its prudential indicators.**

5 MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME – INFLATIONARY INCREASE 2010-11

At the Fire Authority meeting on 10 February 2010, Members adopted a revised Members Allowance Scheme effective from 1st April 2009. The Scheme included an annual inflationary increase and the paper outlined the implications of that increase and sought Members views as to how to proceed.

The Treasurer presented the paper to Members which provided details of the provision in the Members Allowance Scheme for an annual inflationary increase to the allowances based on the prevailing Retail Price Index (excluding mortgage interest) also known as RPI (x). This index had been used to identify inflationary increases to the Scheme for many years and in the past had resulted in very measured increases. However the relevant RPI (x) rate suggested an increase of 4.8% was required with effect from 1st April 2010.

The Treasurer explained that this may appear at odds with the 1% provision made for pay awards for 2010 and the overall financial climate facing public services. However, it was strictly in accordance with the methodology prescribed by the Scheme.

Members were therefore asked to consider and agree one of the four options outlined as follows:

1. Apply the previously agreed RPI(x) increase which based on the March 2010 rate was 4.8%;
2. Apply the average RPI(x) for 2009-10 of 2.51%;
3. Consider an increase based on the 1% pay provision set aside for staff salaries; or
4. Wait until actual pay settlements are known later in the year to provide more context and backdate the increase to Members allowances.

Members discussed the options outlined and agreed that option 4 would be the most prudent option in the current circumstances with a caveat that other external factors such as the economic climate and inflation rates should be used as reference points when the allowances were re-considered later in the year.

RESOLVED: That

the Authority agrees to postpone the inflationary increase in Members Allowances for 2010-11 until later in the year and will consider any increase in light of public sector pay settlements, prevailing inflation rates, the economic climate and any other information considered relevant at the time with a view to agreeing an appropriate level of allowances for the responsibilities associated with the duties of a Fire Authority Member.

PART 2 – BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE

NONE

Annex

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP FOR 2010-11

(1) FIRE AUTHORITY – 23 Members – Con:Lab:Lib (12:7:4)

Chair: Councillor David Topping
Vice Chair: Councillor Graham Smith

Representing Cheshire East Council (6:1:1)

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

Representing Cheshire West and Chester Council (6:2:0)

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
B Crowe	T Sherlock	
Mrs E Johnson	Mrs P Booher	
A Needham		
G Smith		
N Wright		
K Musgrave		

Representing Halton Borough Council (0:2:1)

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

Representing Warrington Borough Council (0:2:2)

Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat
	J Joyce	M Biggin
	Hans Mundry	C Oliver

(2) POLICY COMMITTEE – 10 Members - 5:3:2

Chair: Councillor D Topping

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Topping (C)	J Joyce	L Redhead
G Smith (VC)	R Polhill	R Fletcher
J Crockatt	P Booher	
G Merry		
J Weatherill		

(3) STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 6 Members - 3:2:1 and 3 Independent Members)

Chair: Mr W Ravenscroft * Must be an Independent Member

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
B Crowe	H Mundry	M Biggin
B Livesley	C Thorley	
K Musgrave		
3 INDEPENDENT MEMBERS		
Mr W Ravenscroft (Ch)		
M R Garner		
M D Morris		

(4) PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – 7 Members - 4:2:1 and 1 Independent Member

NB: Members must not be Members of Policy Committee

Chair: Councillor M Simon

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
M Simon (Ch)	T Sherlock	C Oliver
A Needham	S Nelson	
K Musgrave		
N Wright		
1 INDEPENDENT MEMBER		
M W Ravenscroft		

(5) BRIGADE MANAGER'S PAY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 7 Members - 4:2:1

The Membership of the Committee must include the Fire Authority Chair, Vice Chair, and party spokespersons where applicable

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Topping (Ch)	J Joyce	L Redhead
G Smith (VC)	R Polhill	
B Livesley		
K Musgrave		

(6) JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (DISPUTE) (2:1:1)

NB: Members must not be Members of Policy Committee

Chair: Councillor E Johnson

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
E Johnson (C)	C Thorley	C Oliver
B Livesley		

(7) MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP (2:1:1 and 1 Independent Member)

Chair: Cllr B Livesley

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
B Livesley (C)	T Sherlock	L Redhead
A Needham		
1 INDEPENDENT MEMBER		
M R Garner		

(8) RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD 2 Members

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
K Musgrave	C Thorley	

(9) CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (Members of Policy Committee)

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
J Crockett	P Booher	R Fletcher
G Merry	J Joyce	L Redhead
G Smith	R Polhill	
D Topping		
J Weatherill		

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

Equality and Diversity	
Sits on Equality Task Group	S Nelson
Environment	
Sits on Environment Project Board	A Needham
Health and Safety	
Sits on Health and Safety Committee	D Topping

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

Procurement	B Crowe
Finance	G Merry
Older People	P Booher
Young People	H Mundry
Performance Management	M Simon
Information and ICT	R Polhill
Commercial/Business Risk Reduction	B Livesley
Industrial Relations (JCC Chair)	E Johnson

(12) UNITARY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AREAS (UPAs)

The UPA Meetings take place at least eight times a year and all Members are invited to attend meetings held within their constituent area. The meetings will consider local performance together with any specific local issues arising.

Regional Appointments – North West

(13) NORTH WEST FIRE AND RESCUE MANAGEMENT BOARD (2:1:0)

NB: 3 representatives only (2:1:0)

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
D Topping	J Joyce	
G Smith		

(14) LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTROLLED COMPANY (LACC) (1:1:0)

NB: 2 representatives only (1:1:0)

CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
E Johnson	J Joyce	