

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY
held at the WILTSHIRE FRS TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, DEVIZES
on THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER 2008**

Present : Mr D J Willmott (Chairman), Councillor M Bawden, Mrs B Chettleburgh, Mr P R Davis, Brigadier R Hall, Councillor N Martin (up to the end of the business discussed under minute no.56), Mr A Molland, Councillor D Montaut, Mr J Osborn, Mrs P Rugg, Mrs M White, Councillor D Wren.

48 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2008 were confirmed and signed.

49 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Carine, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

50 Members' Interests

Mr Willmott and Councillor Wren each declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in the item discussed under minute no.63 by reason of their positions as Director and Alternate Director respectively of South West Fire Control Service Limited.

51 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman said that the Fire Service College was running some seminars on leadership for members of fire and rescue authorities. Mr Davis had already attended a seminar, and two more members were planning to attend the next of these in the New Year.

Secondly, the Chairman drew members' attention to the Local Government Association's Charter on Equality and Diversity, and said that all members would be asked for their personal commitment to this Charter.

Finally, the Chairman announced that this was the last meeting at which Frank Marshall would be attending as Treasurer as he was retiring from this position at the end of the month. On behalf of all the members, he thanked Mr Marshall for his excellent service to the Authority since 1999 and made a presentation to him in appreciation of all his work over the years.

The Chairman reminded members that the responsibilities of Treasurer would be taken on by the Finance Director, Phil Chow, from 1 January 2009.

52 Questions from the Public

The Chairman replied to two questions put on behalf of Mr J Tray, the local FBU Branch Secretary, regarding (a) the Members' Charter for Equalities and Diversity and (b) the likely timing of a response by the Authority to Part 2 of the Business Case on regional fire controls published by the CLG in November 2008.

53 Finance Review Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Review Committee held on 16 September 2008 were received.

54 Provisional Rate Support Grant Settlement

The Finance Director made a verbal report on the provisional rate support grant settlement confirming a 1.3% increase, i.e. £121,000, as expected.

55 Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

On considering a paper by the Treasurer and Finance Director,

Resolved :

- (a) *To note the changes to Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) requirements, and*
- (b) *To approve the MRP policy statements for 2007/08 and 2008/09 as set out in paragraphs 23 and 25 of the report presented.*

56 Revised Capital Programme 2008/09

On considering a paper by the Treasurer, Finance Director and Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

- (a) *To approve the revised Capital Programme for 2008/09 of £1,162,200 as shown in Appendix A to the paper presented, and in particular to approve the purchase of new servers for the Remsdaq mobilising systems;*
- (b) *To ask officers to ascertain whether some or all of the additional cost in respect of the new servers referred to in (a) can be recouped from the CLG under 'New Burdens' funding;*
- (b) *To note the anticipated underspending of £110,900 on the national Firelink project and to include this project in the 2009/10 capital programme;*
- (c) *To approve the revised prudential indicators, as a result of the change in the capital programme 2008/09, as set out in Appendix B to the paper presented.*

57 Members' Allowances

On considering a paper by the Clerk to the Authority,

Resolved :

- (a) *To increase the basic, special responsibility and co-optees' allowances as recommended in column 3 of the appendix to the paper presented (adjusted in line with the appropriate indexation) with effect from the annual meeting of the Authority in June 2009, and to make appropriate provision in the 2009/10 budget;*
- (b) *To ask the Programme Board to consider the supplementary issues raised by members during the discussion on this matter, with a view to the Board reporting back to the Authority.*

58 Amendments to Financial Regulations

On considering a paper by the Clerk and Finance Director,

Resolved :

To authorise the Clerk and Finance Director to amend Financial Regulations and other documents within the Members' Handbook to reflect the cessation of the post of Treasurer and the responsibilities of that post being transferred to the Finance Director with effect from 1 January 2009.

59 Protection, Prevention and Intervention

A short video presentation was made.

60 Standards Committee

The minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on 13 November 2008 were received.

61 Programme Board

The minutes of meetings of the Programme Board held on 22 October and 26 November 2008 were received. On noting the work of the Task and Finish Groups set up by the Board,

Resolved :

To ask the Programme Board to examine the issue of how scrutiny is undertaken within the Authority, and to make recommendations to the Authority.

62 Regional Management Board

The minutes of meetings of the Board held on 19 September and 7 November 2008 were received.

In connection with minutes 26 and 27 of the meeting of the RMB on 7 November, copies of two letters sent by the Chairman of the RMB to the CLG were considered and the sentiments contained therein were endorsed.

63 South West Fire Control Service Limited

Mr Strickland, Clerk to the Authority, declared an interest in this item, by reason of his position as Company Secretary of South West Fire Control Service Limited.

The minutes of the AGM of the Company held on 7 November 2008 were received, together with a copy of the Directors' Report and Accounts for the period ended 31 March 2008.

64 Terms of Office of Members of the Fire Authority

On considering a paper by the Clerk to the Authority,

Resolved :

To note the report, and in particular to note that officers will avoid convening any member-level meetings in the period between next year's elections to the new unitary Wiltshire Council and the first meeting of that Council at which appointments to the

Fire Authority for the ensuing year will be made.

65 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved :

In accordance with Section 100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the public from the business specified in minute no.66 below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A(3) of the Act, and/or exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

66 Comprehensive Performance Assessment

On considering a paper by the Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

- (a) To note the opportunity given to the Authority to comment on the draft report from the Audit Commission on the CPA recategorisation assessment;*
- (b) To note that the Authority cannot express a public view on the outcome of the assessment at this stage because the report is embargoed until 3 March 2009;*
- (c) To authorise the Chief Fire Officer after consultation with the Programme Board to submit, on the Authority's behalf, comments on those inaccuracies of detail identified in the draft report, but otherwise to offer no comments;*
- (d) To thank the officers for their hard work in preparing the Authority and members for the assessment process.*

(Duration of meeting 11.30am to 12.55pm)