



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority held
at 10:00 hours on Friday 28 September 2018 at the
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury**

Members present: Cllr Spencer Flower (Chairman); Cllr Abdul Amin; Cllr Richard Biggs; Cllr Ernie Clark; Cllr Peter Hutton; Cllr Bob Jones; Cllr Rebecca Knox; Cllr Brian Mattock; Cllr Christopher Newbury; Cllr Paul Oatway; Cllr Byron Quayle; Cllr Pip Ridout; Cllr Vikki Slade; Cllr Ann Stribley

Officer attendance: Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell; Director of Finance and Treasurer; Mr Phil Chow; Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Mr Jonathan Mair; Director of Service Support, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) John Aldridge; Director of Community Safety, ACFO Jim Mahoney; Director of Service Improvement, ACFO Mick Stead; Director of People Services, Ms Jenny Long; Head of Financial Services, Mr Ian Cotter; Head of Strategic Planning & Corporate Assurance, Mrs Jill McCrae

Guest: Mr Steve Mason (Real World HR)

18/38 Welcome

18/38.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed attendees, including Cllr Brian Mattock to his first meeting.

18/39 Apologies

18/39.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Garry Perkins (Vice Chairman); Cllr Kevin Brookes; Cllr Beverley Dunlop; Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), Derek James.

**18/40 Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest and Notifications of Any
Other Business**

Initials _____

18/40.1 The Chairman asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures from Members, however Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Ben Ansell advised that he was a trustee of the SafeWise charity and wished to declare this for item 18/50 later in this meeting.

18/41 Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on Wednesday 6 June 2018

18/41.1 The Chairman asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

18/41.2 CFO Ansell advised Members that the first part of the inspection to be carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) would commence on 8 October with a number of discovery meetings and briefing sessions with staff. This would then be followed by our Strategic Briefing to the HMICFRS team on 7 November, with the formal inspection taking place from 19 - 23 November.

18/41.3 **RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed without amendment and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

18/42 Minutes of the Finance & Governance meeting on 31 July 2018 and a verbal update from the 20 September meeting

18/42.1 The Chairman of the Finance & Governance meeting on 31 July 2018, Cllr Bob Jones, provided a verbal update from the meeting held on the 20 September 2018, confirming that the annual Statement of Assurance had been approved and highlighted the discussion at the meeting regarding Member Development.

18/42.2 Cllr Jones went on to advise Members that he had spoken with the Director of People, Ms Jenny Long, regarding e-learning packages available to Members.

18/42.3 Members discussed Member Development and the Chairman commented that there was a need to provide this due to the complexities of the Service and the legal framework within which the Authority operated. He advised that a paper on Member Development would be brought to the Authority meeting in December 2018.

18/42.4 **Resolved: Members noted the draft minutes of the Finance & Governance meeting of the 31 July 2018 and the verbal update from 20 September 2018.**

Initials _____

18/43 Corporate video – We are DWFire

- 18/43.1 CFO Ansell introduced the corporate video – We are DWFire - which outlined the many and varied activities undertaken by the Service in its prevention, protection, resilience and emergency response roles. CFO Ansell confirmed that the work to produce this video was completed by the Services internal media team.
- 18/43.2 CFO Ansell invited Members to comment on the broad range of activities undertaken. Members agreed that the 'We are DWFire' messages "reflected the brilliant and talented people who work daily to provide this incredible range of services".

18/44 Finance Principles

- 18/44.1 The Director of Finance & Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow, introduced the paper setting out the financial assumptions and principles in preparation for establishing the next iteration of the Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) and budget for 2019-20, which will be presented at the meeting of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) in February 2019.
- 18/44.2 Mr Chow advised Members that the financial principles and assumptions were broadly a continuation of previous years financial planning assumptions, however of the ten presented, three had changed.
- 18/44.3 Principle three regarding taxbase estimates established an increase in the assumption from 1% to assume a prudent 1.5% increase each year for planning purposes, as increases in the last three years have been around 1.8% per annum.
- 18/44.4 Principle six was a new principle, to suggest that Members lobby Government for the Authority to have freedoms and flexibilities for council tax increases of 3% or £5 whichever is the greater, without the need to hold a referendum. Members agreed to a revised principle that 'the Authority supports lobbying Government to have freedoms and flexibilities for council tax increases of 3% or £5 whichever is the greater, without the need to hold a referendum'.
- 18/44.5 Principle ten was a revision of the Authority's current policy to maintain general balances at £2.5m. Mr Chow explained, following a review and as a result of recent national discussions regarding the levels of general reserves within the Fire Sector, a principle is proposed to maintain general balances at £2.5m or 5%, whichever is the greater, and to transfer excesses above this amount each year to the transformational reserve.

Initials _____

- 18/44.6 The Chairman advised Members that a letter and briefing note had been prepared for sending to Members of Parliament (MP) within the Authority's areas and other key stakeholders in Government, regarding our financial position, a copy of which would be distributed to Members in due course.
- 18/44.7 CFO Ansell reminded Members of discussions the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) had with the Minister for Fire & Policing, Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP, who at the time was 'not convinced' that fire and rescue services had yet made a convincing and compelling case for freedoms and flexibilities in setting council tax. CFO Ansell added that since that time he had been invited to discuss the matter with the Minister, which led to a productive conversation. The CFO also noted that the NFCC was also asking for £5 on behalf of all English fire authorities.
- 18/44.8 In response to a Member's question CFO Ansell confirmed that the Service was already operating with on-call firefighters crewing at 80% of appliances.
- 18/44.9 Members agreed that this Authority should lobby government to obtain the freedom and flexibility for a council tax increase of £5 per annum without the need for a future referendum; and all Members were encouraged to take every opportunity to lobby in support of this.
- 18/44.10 **RESOLVED: Members endorsed and approved the revised financial planning assumptions and principles to be applied when establishing the MTFP and setting the budget precept levels for 2019-20.**
- 18/44.11 **ACTION: CFO Ansell to provide Members with copies of the letter and the briefing note once completed and sent to MPs.**

18/45 Annual Report

- 18/45.1 Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), Mick Stead, introduced the report stating that this was second annual report for the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) and covered the period 2017-18. He added that the report was aligned to the priorities set out in the Community Safety Plan and reflects the headline performance for the year in question, as presented to the Authority in June 2018.
- 18/45.2 ACFO Stead confirmed that the report included a position statement regarding the progress the Service had made in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion, which was a requirement of the Equalities Act 2010. He further confirmed that it also included the position relating to the progress that had been made in introducing apprenticeships into the Service.
- 18/45.3 CFO Ansell explained that the format had previously been very well received by constituent authorities, members of the public and staff. In particular case studies had received very favourable feedback.

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- 18/45.4 CFO Ansell took Members to fire related deaths and confirmed that HM Coroner had sadly ruled on seven fire deaths adding that three others were awaiting a ruling and advised that the Annual Report would be updated to reflect this prior to publication.
- 18/45.5 ACFO Stead confirmed that, once agreed, the report would be available on the website along with the approved Statement of Assurance and Annual Accounts.
- 18/45.6 Members noted their contentment with the style and method of the Annual Report.
- 18/45.7 **RESOLVED: Members considered and approved the Annual report as set out in Appendix A.**

18/46 Senior Management restructure

- 18/46.1 CFO Ansell reminded Members that the MTFP set out the need to make £1.2 million savings in 2019-20, with further savings requirements in future years. He added that this paper outlined the robust plans in place to realise the required savings.
- 18/46.2 CFO Ansell outlined the proposed changes to the responsibilities of the role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) to realise £95.5k of savings within the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). CFO Ansell added that the proposed changes to the responsibilities of the DCFO required the Authority's approval.
- 18/46.3 CFO Ansell confirmed that the Service continued to respond to the financial challenges outlined in our MTFP while maintaining a robust strategic capacity and expertise that enabled a seamless transition at a time of complex change. CFO Ansell added that the proposed SLT restructure provided considerable savings at senior management level.
- 18/46.4 CFO Ansell, with the Chairman's agreement, invited the Director of People, Ms Jenny Long, and Mr Steve Mason (Real World HR), to the table to be available to respond to Members' queries.
- 18/46.5 CFO Ansell took Members to the report which outlined the detail of the opportunities for savings by not replacing the retiring ACFO but highlighted the need to maintain strategic operational command at Gold Level (Level 4). The CFO confirmed that, following an acquisition phase, the DCFO had demonstrated competence and confidence in this area. This process had culminated in a rigorous assessment, undertaken by an external assessor, which had been successfully completed by the DCFO.

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18/46.6 Members discussed the proposals outlined in the report and signified their approval.

18/46.7 **RESOLVED: Members agreed to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer assuming additional responsibilities and receiving a commensurate uplift in pay to align with that set by other fire & rescue services in England.**

18/47 Members' Podcast

18/47.1 The CFO introduced the reflective Members podcast, highlighting the activities which had taken place between June and September. The podcast can be accessed via this link: <https://youtu.be/SCGpVPlivnQ>

18/47.2 CFO Ansell thanked the Head of Information Management and Communications, Mrs Vikki Shearing, and her team for the production of the podcast. He added that he had received a letter from the Prime Minister praising the Service and its personnel who were involved in the aftermath of the Salisbury nerve agent incident and which was now framed and on display in reception at Service Headquarters.

18/48 To consider passing the following resolution:

18/48.1 In accordance with Section 100A (1, 2 & 3) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public for the business specified below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

18/48.2 **RESOLVED: To close the meeting to the press and public.**

18/49 Date of Next Meeting

18/49.1 The Chairman confirmed the date of the next Authority meeting as Thursday 13 December 2018 at Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Five Rivers Health and Wellbeing Centre, Hulse Road, Salisbury SP1 3NR, from 10am.

Initials _____

Part 2

18/50 Skills for Life (formerly Safety Centre) update

- 18/50.1 Members considered the declaration of interest made by CFO Ansell at 18/40.1 above, taking advice from the Clerk & Monitoring Officer. They were satisfied that the CFO remain present for the paper.
- 18/50.2 CFO Ansell introduced the paper and the Director of Service Support, ACFO John Aldridge, took Members through the report.
- 18/50.3 Members discussed the options before them.
- 18/50.4 **RESOLVED: Members agreed that a paper be returned to the Authority meeting on 13 December.**

18/51 Senior Management Restructure and future role of Treasurer

- 18/51.1 Mr Steve Mason (Real World HR), entered the room to be available to advise Members in their deliberations; all officers not required for this item and both Director of Finance and Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow and Head of Financial Services, Mr Ian Cotter left the meeting.
- 18/51.2 Members discussed principles within the report.
- 18/51.3 Members unanimously supported the proposals.
- 18/51.4 **RESOLVED: Members approved recommendations 1 and 2 of the report.**

Meeting closed: 11:55am

Signed: _____

Initials _____