

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY held at the BRIGADE TRAINING CENTRE, DEVIZES on THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2001**

**Present :** Mr D J Willmott (Chairman), Mr B Atfield, Mr P R Davis, Councillor M Dilley, Councillor F Foley, Councillor T Page, Mrs P Rugg, Mrs M E Salisbury, Mr T R Sturgis, Mr N S E Westbrook.

**127 Minutes of Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2000 were confirmed and signed.

**128 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Dart and Mrs Morris.

**129 Chairman's Announcements**

i) Health and Safety Seminar

The Chairman reported on the Health and Safety Seminar he had attended with the Assistant Chief Officer in London, run by the Local Government Association in association with CACFOA. The seminar highlighted some of the legal, financial and moral risks of failing to encourage a developing health and safety culture. Two presentations, about legal liabilities and equipment standards, had been particularly good.

ii) Performance Indicators 1999/2000

The Chairman reported on the performance indicators for 1999/2000 published by the Audit Commission on 10 January. The aim of the report was to inform the public debate about the performance of fire services and to enable brigades to review their performance.

Based on fire calls per thousand population, Wiltshire & Swindon had recorded 4.2 against a national average of 7.5 with attendance standards to incidents reaching 97.7% compared with 96% across England and Wales.

Fires per thousand dwellings had been recorded at 2.03 compared with the average of 2.6. The only disappointing statistic was the average time taken to carry out inspections for fire safety certificates which, in Wiltshire & Swindon, had taken 246 days compared with an average of 96 days.

Fire authority prudence was demonstrated by the fact that the Wiltshire & Swindon Authority had the fifth lowest spending per head of population measured against the 49 brigades in England and Wales.

**130 District Auditor's Management Letter 1999/2000**

On considering the District Auditor's management letter for 1999/2000, with a covering paper by the Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

- a) *To note the District Auditor's recommendations.*
- b) *To ask officers to report back at appropriate times on the actions taken in response to the District Auditor's recommendations.*

**131 Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement to 31 December 2000**

A paper by the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer was received.

**132 Capital Expenditure 2001/2**

On considering a paper by the Treasurer,

Resolved :

- a) *To approve the 2001/2 capital programme for the Brigade, as set out in the appendix to the paper presented.*
- b) *To ask the Clerk to express the Authority's gratitude to the Wiltshire Police Authority for the transfer of its supplementary credit approval.*

**133 Budget 2001/2**

On considering the estimates approved at the last meeting, and on noting that no formal representations had been received from the constituent authorities, the Chairman moved and Mr Westbrook seconded the following motion :

- 1) To approve the Revenue Budget for 2001/2 at a net figure of £15,777,100.
- 2) To authorise the Clerk to give notice to the constituent authorities of the amount of the contribution to be paid by each Council in accordance with the Wiltshire Fire Services Combination Scheme.
- 3) To make the contribution due from each constituent authority payable by instalments of amounts and on dates to be agreed by the Treasurer and the constituent authorities; but in the absence of such agreement, to determine the amounts and dates in accordance with paragraph 21(4) of the above Scheme.
- 4) To authorise the Treasurer to borrow such sums as may be required in respect of schemes in the approved capital budget.
- 5) To authorise the Treasurer to pay out of the Combined Fire Service Fund sums required in respect of :
  - i) all accounts and debts due by the Authority forming the Authority's estimated gross revenue expenditure for 2001/2 in the approved revenue budget, and such changes as may be agreed subsequently by the Authority;
  - ii) the cost of capital items including the purchase and leasing of equipment, specified in the capital budget; and
  - iii) car loans and such other loans made by the Authority as may be approved.

Councillor Dilley moved the following amendment, seconded by Councillor Page :

To amend the budget by the deletion of development items to a value of £44,000, in order to restrict the overall increase over 2000/1 to 4.1%.

The amendment was lost.

The motion moved by the Chairman was then put to the meeting and it was

Resolved :

- (a) *To approve the Revenue Budget for 2001/2 at a net figure of £15,777,100.*
- (b) *To authorise the Clerk to give notice to the constituent authorities of the amount of the contribution to be paid by each Council in accordance with the Wiltshire Fire Services Combination Scheme.*
- (c) *To make the contribution due from each constituent authority payable by instalments of amounts and on dates to be agreed by the Treasurer and the constituent authorities; but in the absence of such agreement, to determine the amounts and dates in accordance with paragraph 21(4) of the above Scheme.*
- (d) *To authorise the Treasurer to borrow such sums as may be required in respect of schemes in the approved capital budget.*
- (e) *To authorise the Treasurer to pay out of the Combined Fire Service Fund sums required in respect of :*
  - i) *all accounts and debts due by the Authority forming the Authority's estimated gross revenue expenditure for 2001/2 in the approved revenue budget, and such changes as may be agreed subsequently by the Authority;*
  - ii) *the cost of capital items including the purchase and leasing of equipment, specified in the capital budget; and*
  - iii) *car loans and such other loans made by the Authority as may be approved.*

Councillor Dilley and Councillor Page asked for their vote against resolution (a) to be recorded.

#### **134 Review of Income Fees and Charges**

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

Resolved :

*To approve the scale of charges as set out in the appendix to the paper presented, to take effect from 1 April 2001*

**135 Best Value :**

(1) Review Panel

The Minutes of a meeting of the Panel held on 23 November 2000 were received.

(2) Revision of Fundamental Review Methodology

On considering a paper by the Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

*To approve the amended Best Value Review Methodology.*

**136 Standards of Fire Cover**

On considering a paper by the Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

(a) *To endorse the Chief Fire Officer's intention to undertake an updated comprehensive standards of fire cover review for the Swindon area.*

(b) *To give members the opportunity of considering the Chief Fire Officer's preliminary proposals through a seminar for all members, prior to final outcomes being considered at a formal meeting of the Authority.*

**137 Sponsorship : Proposed Access Road, Westlea Fire Station**

On considering a paper by the Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

(a) *Subject to no direct construction costs falling to be met by the Authority, to approve the construction of a private access road at Westlea Fire Station as shown on the plan presented, on terms to be agreed by the Clerk.*

(b) *To approve the construction costs being met by sponsorship from local industry.*

(c) *To ask the Chief Fire Officer to pass on the Authority's congratulations to the staff at Westlea Fire Station for this initiative.*

**138 Retained Firefighters Position Statement**

A paper by the Chief Fire Officer was received.

**139 Policy on Retirement of Retained Firefighters**

On considering a paper by the Chief Fire Officer,

Resolved :

(a) *In view of the undetermined effect of the Part-Time Worker (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations on pension entitlements, to defer consideration of this matter.*

(b) *To ask the Chief Fire Officer to bring forward a further paper when the position with regard to the Regulations is clearer.*

**140 Operational Performance Information**

A paper by the Chief Fire Officer was received and a short video presentation was made.

**141 Fire Safety Performance Information**

A paper by the Chief Fire Officer was received.

**142 Corporate Plans**

On considering the following :

- i) Best Value Performance Plan 2001-2002
- ii) Revised Corporate Plan 2001-2006
- iii) Service Plan 2001-2006

Resolved :

*To approve the three plans as presented, subject to the Chief Fire Officer consulting Group Leaders on the final versions when all the information outstanding is to hand.*

**143 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy**

On considering a paper by the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk,

Resolved :

*To approve the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, incorporating minor amendments suggested by members.*

**144 Seminars for Members**

(1) Review of Financial Plan

It was agreed to hold a seminar on Thursday 7 June 2001 at 2.30pm at the Brigade Training Centre to review the Five Year Financial Plan.

(2) Human Rights Act

It was noted that a seminar for members on the Human Rights Act would be held on Thursday 22 March 2001 at the Brigade Training Centre.

**145 Wiltshire Local Government Association**

On considering a paper by the Clerk,

Resolved :

(a) *To accept an invitation to join the Wiltshire Local Government Association.*

(b) *To appoint the Vice Chairman as the Authority's representative on the Association.*

**146 Collaboration with the Emergency Services : Joint Member Monitoring Group (JMMG)**

A summary of issues discussed at the JMMG meetings of 14 November 2000 and 9 January 2001 was received.

**147 Annual Report 1999/2000**

The Annual Report 1999/2000 was received.

**148 South West Forum of Fire Authorities**

A summary of the meeting of the Forum held on 3 November 2000 was received.

(Duration of meeting 10.30am to 11.35am)