

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY
held at the WILTSHIRE FRS TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, DEVIZES
on TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2012**

Present : Cllr Brigadier R Hall (Chairman), Cllr P Davis, Cllr Mrs M Groom, Cllr H Marshall, Cllr N Martin, Cllr G Payne, Cllr G Perkins, Cllr J Osborn (until the conclusion of the business under minute no. 10), Cllr Mrs B Wayman, Cllr D Wren, Cllr B Wright

1 Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2011 were confirmed and signed.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. C Devine

3 Members' Interests

The Chairman reminded members of the need to declare any personal or prejudicial interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

The Clerk to the Authority declared an interest in the business under minute no. 12 because part of the subject matter concerned the contractual arrangements for the services of a Clerk.

4 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman referred to:

- the successful training day at the FRS Training & Development Centre organised for 40 operational soldiers from the 1st Royal Horse Artillery and the possibility of further reciprocal training opportunities;
- the LGA's Annual Fire Conference on 20 and 21 March at which the Authority would be represented by the Vice-Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer and at which Cllr Newbury would be chairing a panel discussion on industrial relations and resilience as part of his role on the LGA;
- the forthcoming briefing for all Members on-site at the Hot Fire Training facility at Kemble Airfield on the 28 March; and
- the elections to Swindon Borough Council to be held on 3 May 2012.

In connection with the last of the above matters, the Chairman thanked the retiring Swindon Members for their contribution to the work of the Authority.

5 Questions from the Public

There were no questions from the public.

6 Programme & Scrutiny Board

A report of the meeting of the Programme & Scrutiny Board held on 24 January 2012 was received.

7 National Framework Consultation Document

On receiving a verbal report by the Chief Fire Officer and on noting that a copy of the national framework consultation document would be sent to all Members,

Resolved:

To authorise the Chief Fire Officer to respond to the consultation document on behalf of the Authority subject to (i) a copy of the draft response being sent to all Members for comment and (ii) subsequent consultation with the Chairman.

8 Finance Review & Audit Committee

The minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2011 were received.

9 Capital Programme 2012/13 and Prudential Indicators

On considering a paper by the Finance Director,

Resolved:

- a) *To approve the Capital Programme for 2012/13 as shown in Appendix A to the paper presented;*
- b) *In accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008, to approve the asset life (equal instalment) method for prudential borrowing as the Authority's policy for the calculation of minimum revenue provision in 2012/13.*
- c) *To approve the key prudential indicators in respect of the Capital Programme for 2012/13 as shown in Appendix B to the paper presented.*

10 Revenue Budget 2012/13 and Council Tax Resolution

Before the discussion on this item the Chairman referred to a letter which the Fire Minister had sent to the Chairmen of all Fire and Rescue Authorities and which he had arranged to be copied to all Members.

On considering a paper by the Finance Director and Chief Fire Officer which included the recommendation of the Finance Director (in his capacity as Treasurer of the Authority) and supported by the Chief Fire Officer that, in order to protect the Authority's long term financial position, the Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2012/13 offered by Government be not accepted,

Resolved:

- a) *Not to increase the council tax requirement for 2012/13 and to accept the Governments' offer of Council Tax Freeze Grant equivalent to a 3% increase in council tax.*
- b) *To acknowledge the long term financial risks (identified in the paper presented) inherent in the acceptance of the Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2012/13.*
- c) *To approve a Net Revenue Budget for 2012/13 of £25,277,900 to include a contribution to balances of £361,500.*
- d) *To approve the Authority's basic amount of council tax for 2012/13 of £62.38 (i.e. no change from 2011/12) with the following consequential council tax levels at each band:*

<i>Band A</i>	<i>£41.59</i>
<i>Band B</i>	<i>£48.52</i>
<i>Band C</i>	<i>£55.45</i>
<i>Band D</i>	<i>£62.38</i>
<i>Band E</i>	<i>£76.24</i>
<i>Band F</i>	<i>£90.10</i>
<i>Band G</i>	<i>£103.97</i>
<i>Band H</i>	<i>£124.76</i>

- e) *To authorise the Finance Director to give notice of the approved council tax requirement to the appropriate billing authorities.*
- f) *To authorise the Finance Director 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 gross revenue expenditure for 2012/13 in the approved 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. *Such loans made by the Authority as may be approved.*
- e) *To authorise the Finance Director to borrow such sums as may be required in respect of schemes in the capital budget.*

11 Protection, Prevention and Intervention

A short visual presentation was made.

12 Staffing Committee

The minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 25 January 2012 were received.

13 Pay Policy Statement

On considering a paper by the Brigade Manager, People, and recommendations of the Staffing Committee,

Resolved:

- (a) *To approve the Authority's pay policy statement for 2012/13, as required by the Localism Act 2011,*
- (b) *To ask officers to review the statement once the final DCLG guidance on pay policy statements has been received, and if amendments are required, to present the revised statement to the Authority meeting following the receipt of the revised guidance; and*
- (c) *To ask officers to monitor developments in other relevant authorities with regard to senior pay with a view to reporting to the Staffing Committee prior to the review of the pay policy statement by the Authority in February 2013*

14 Standards Committee

The Minutes of the Standards Committee held on 24 January 2012 were received.

15 The Provisions of the Localism Act 2011 Regarding Members' Conduct

On considering a paper by the Clerk to the Authority and recommendations of the Standards Committee,

Resolved:

- a) *To note the report.*

- b) *To note that detailed recommendations and proposals will be presented for the Authority's consideration at its annual meeting on 30 May 2012 to enable the Authority to comply with the coming into force on 1 July 2012 of the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 regarding members' conduct.*
- c) *Meanwhile, to ask the Clerk to the Authority to advertise for the appointment of one Independent Person and one reserve.*
- d) *To appoint a Panel comprising three members of the current Standards Committee to interview candidates and to make a recommendation to the Authority on 30 May 2012 for appointment.*
- e) *To delegate to the Clerk to the Authority the selection of members to the panel referred to in (d) above after consultation with the Chairmen of the Authority and of the Standards Committee.*
- f) *To approve the payment of a retainer fee to the Independent Person and reserve, and the reimbursement of reasonable expenses, and to authorise the Clerk to the Authority to determine the amount of the fee and the basis of reimbursement in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.*

16 External Support Services

On considering a paper by the Clerk to the Authority, Chief Fire Officer and Finance Director,

Resolved:

To extend the current arrangements for securing legal services and specialist personnel advice for two years w.e.f. 1 April 2012, on terms to be agreed by the Clerk to the Authority.

(Duration of meeting 10.30 a.m. to 11.55a.m.)