

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD AT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW,
ON FRIDAY 16 DECEMBER 2011**

Present : Councillors D Ridgway (in the chair), T Austin, C Bampton-Smith, V Binney, R Brown, A Castle, J Cole, J Dodds, R Grahame, D Hall, S Hamilton, P Harrand, D Hopkins, J Hughes, A Hussain, J Illingworth, M Khan, B Smith, C Townsley and A Wallis

Apologies: Councillors A McKenna and G Thornton

In attendance : Major J Mayo

37 ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

The meeting determined that there were no items which necessitated the exclusion of the public.

38 URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in any matter under discussion at the meeting.

40 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2011 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

41 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Audit Committee at a meeting held on 30 September 2011 be received.

42 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Councillor Harrand raised the issue of the recording in the Minutes of his own and Councillor Binney's abstentions from the vote on agenda item 12 – New Control Project – Submission of Bid (Min no. 12 refers). The Director of Corporate Resources advised that the Constitution did not currently provide for this but this element would be reviewed at the Annual meeting in June 2012.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Executive Committee at a meeting held on 31 October 2011 be received.

43 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That, subject to the amendment of the list of Members present at the meeting in respect of Councillors Bampton-Smith and Townsley, the Minutes of the Community Safety Committee at a meeting held on 4 November 2011 be received.

44 MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee at a meeting held on 11 November 2011 be received.

45 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee at a meeting held on 18 November 2011 be received.

46 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - MINUTES

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Minutes of the Fire Commission at a meeting held on 14 October 2011 be received;
- (ii) That the Minutes of the Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board at a meeting held on 13 September 2011 be received; and

- (iii) That the Minutes of the Fire Services Management Committee at a meeting held on 16 September 2011 be received.

47 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Senior Corporate Resources Manager submitted a report which outlined the activities of the Brigade in the areas of operations and technical matters for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 October 2011.

Members commented specifically on the West Yorkshire's excellent comparison with other Metropolitan Brigades and discussed issues, targets and results related to child fatalities, operational complaints and the recorded reduction in compliments for school and station visits.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That detail of the operational complaints be submitted to the next meeting of the Audit committee and circulated to all Members for information; and
- (iii) That information on comparative costs per head of population in relation to West Yorkshire and other Metropolitan Fire Authorities (broken down on a precept income basis) be submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee and to all Members in time for the budget briefings in January.

48 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Members considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the outcome of the formal consultation process in relation to the seven Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) proposals submitted to West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority on 9 September 2011.

It was reported that access had been given to Members to all consultation responses together with the formal response from the Fire Brigade's Union prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the significant level of responses received during the consultation process, which had been executed in accordance with recognised best practice procedures, be noted; and

- (ii) That confirmation be made that the full range of views and opinions raised during the consultation process would be considered during the debate and discussions on the seven Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) proposals submitted by the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive (Min no. 49 refers).

49 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive submitted a report which presented the final proposals in relation to seven specific Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) actions following completion of the 13-week consultation process. An addendum to the report had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting following the closure of the consultation process on 9 December together with a copy of the formal response from the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU).

Members were advised in detail of the comments received in relation to the seven proposals together with the response of the Chief Fire Officer and thanked officers for their professional approach during the course of the consultation process.

There was some discussion about individual proposals and it was moved and seconded that the decision on the proposal to construct a new fire station to replace Gipton and Stanks fire stations (and so remove 24 full time posts from the establishment by way of planned retirements) be deferred for a further six months to enable additional public comment and further consideration of the proposal itself. Professional reassurance was given about the response times and level of cover which would be applied to the re-located Gipton and Stanks stations.

The Chief Fire Officer responded that, in order to make any attempt to breach the future funding gap in Fire Authority budgets and having had regard to the comments received during the consultation process, all seven proposals remained appropriate and that further efficiencies were still required. Members recognised that this was the case and there had been similar concerns raised about the other proposals.

It was reported also that, together with the changes to station locations as proposed in the IRMP, service delivery would continue to maintain a focus on prevention and protection. It was also reported that the FBU interpretation of response times in each business case was not accurate and Members were advised that officers remained wholly supportive of the plans and that they were robust and proportional to risk, taking into account diminishing resources.

The proposed amendment in respect of the relocation of Gipton and Stanks fire stations, on being put to the vote, was lost and it was,

RESOLVED

- (i) That, having had regard to the feedback of the consultation process, the IRMP programme be approved as set out in Section 2 of the report;
- (ii) That the capital investment required to deliver this plan be included within the Authority's medium term financial plan; and
- (iii) That approval be given for the purchase of the land required in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders.

50 OPERATIONS ASSESSEMENT AND FIRE PEER CHALLENGE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Operations which advised Members of the latest proposals for Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge as devised jointly by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and the Local Government Association (LGA).

It was reported that the Operational Assessment had originally been part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process which had been removed in May 2010. The process encouraged sector led improvement and had been replaced by a revised toolkit established jointly by the LGA and CFOA. West Yorkshire had been invited to take part in the pilot project between 7 – 9 February 2012. The project would incorporate both self-assessment and peer challenge elements and would consider seven key areas of assessment (KAA) as detailed in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

51 CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE REPORT

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which updated Members on the Customer Service Excellence Assessment which took place in October 2011.

Members were advised that the Service had been awarded Full Compliance against all 57 elements, maintaining the previously awarded four Compliance Plus awards and including a further five new Compliance Plus awards.

RESOLVED

That the attainment of the Customer Service Excellence standard with full compliance against all 57 elements incorporating 9 Compliance Plus awards be noted.

52 LOCALISM ACT

Members considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which advised on the implications of the Localism Act 2011 which had achieved Royal Assent on 15 November 2011.

The few elements of the Act which would apply to Fire and Rescue Authorities related to;

- Enhanced powers to do anything they considered appropriate for the purposes of carrying out any of their functions (power not as wide, however, as that of general competence conferred upon Principal Councils)
- Revised charging powers - subject to statutory limitations eg land-based firefighting and life and property protection – new areas for charging to be agreed following public consultation
- Abolition of previous statutory requirement for Standards Committees – provision to be made however for alleged breaches of the adopted Code of Conduct with limited sanctions
- Increased transparency over senior officer pay – including publication of policies on pay, bonuses and severance terms etc
- New power of approval / veto over excessive precept rises
- New community right to challenge and bid for assets of community value (commercial organisations will not be permitted to bid to provide fire and rescue services which were not “relevant authorities” for the purposes of the Act)

Members were advised that further reports would be submitted as appropriate with detail of changes in respect of the Localism Act 2011 as they impacted on the work of this Authority.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

53 INSTITUTE OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT – MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which sought approval for the attendance of a Member at an Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) course over two weekends in early 2012.

The place would be 50% Local Government Yorkshire and Humber (LGYH) funded and would cost the Authority £190 - £250 (dependent upon chosen level of study). Travel and subsistence allowances would be payable. The cost of participation could be met from within existing revenue budget provision.

RESOLVED

- (i) That approval be given to the attendance of a Member at the Institute of Leadership and Management course to be held in Barnsley in early 2012; and
- (ii) Such approval at (i) above to be applied to Level 3 study.

54 COMMUNITY COVENANT SCHEME

A representative of the Armed Forces community attended the meeting to present Members with information related the “Armed Forces Covenant : Today and Tomorrow” campaign. The campaign sought to formalise community and local government support for members of the Armed Forces who had in past been disadvantaged as a direct result of being a member of the Armed Forces.

Members were advised that it was hoped that the scheme would strengthen ties between public services and develop a level of mutual understanding and it was further reported that all 9 local authorities and West and South Yorkshire were working towards formally adopting the scheme.

RESOLVED

That Members and Officers of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority offer formal support for the Armed Forces Community Covenant Scheme.

Chair