

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

6 May 2009

Present:-

Councillors B. Hughes (Chairman), Button, Ford, Fry, Gordon, Hannon, Healey, S. Hughes, Leaves, Lewis, Manning, Mrs. Nicholson, Parker, Mrs. Parsons, Viney, Wallace, Way and Yeomans

Apologies:-

Councillors Cann, Clatworthy, Dyke, Foggin and Mochnacz

DSFRA/93. Death of Councillor Des Shadrick

The Authority stood in silence as a mark of respect for Councillor Des Shadrick who had passed away on 18 April 2009 following a long illness.

The Chairman and other Members paid tribute to Councillor Shadrick for his dedication and work both as a Member of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority and as a long-standing Devon County Councillor serving the Holsworthy community.

DSFRA/94. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2009 be signed as a correct record.

DSFRA/95. Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to consider whether they had any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for the current meeting and declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

DSFRA/96. Minutes of Committees Etc.

(a) Human Resources Management and Development Committee

The Vice-Chair of the Committee (Councillor Mrs. Parsons) **MOVED** the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 April 2009 which had considered, amongst other things:

- the final draft of "Making the Connections" - the Authority's Single Equality Scheme 2009/10 to 2011/12;
- a report on absence management;
- a update report on the staff survey;
- a report on a reduction in the number of Area Manager positions;
- a report on the Working Time Directive and other proposed changes to legislation and their potential impact on the Service;

- a report on the Driving Time Regulations and their potential impact on the Service; and
- an update report on the pay settlement for non-uniformed staff.

The Equality Advisor commented that the Single Equality Scheme had been produced following engagement with all key stakeholders and relevant community groups (e.g. Race Equality Councils; Learning Options (Devon); Compass (Somerset). The Chief Fire Officer commented that adoption of the strategy would help ensure that both the Authority and Service were able to translate their commitment to equality and diversity into practice. The Authority commended in particular Equality and Diversity Officer Michelle Smitham for her considerable achievement in producing the Scheme.

The Chairman also referred to the Local Government Association Equality and Diversity Charter and indicated his wish to see 100% sign-up to this by Authority Members.

RESOLVED

- (i) that, in accordance with the recommendation of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee (Minute HRMDC/39 refers), the final draft of “Making the Connections” – Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Single Equality Scheme 2009/10 to 2011/12 be approved;
- (ii) That all fire and rescue authority Members be encouraged to sign the LGA Equality and Diversity Charter for fire and rescue authority Members and that a copy of the Charter be included in the induction material for new Members to sign;
- (iii) that, subject to (i) and (ii) above and in accordance with Standing Orders, the Minutes be adopted.

DSFRA/97. Confirmation of Rates Payable in 2009/10 under the Authority Approved Scheme of Members Allowances

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/09/10) on the rates of allowances to be payable in the forthcoming financial year, as required by the relevant Regulations. A full review of the Authority’s allowances scheme had been conducted in the previous year and, while the scheme provided for an annual uprating mechanism, the Authority was invited to consider whether it would wish the rates currently payable to be uprated for the current financial year.

RESOLVED that the rates of Member allowances payable in the current (2009/10) financial year be frozen at the levels as set for the previous financial year, as set out in Sections 2 and 3 of report DSFRA/09/10, with no automatic uprating to be applied.

(**NOTE:** in accordance with Standing Order 25(3) Councillor Ford requested that his vote against the above decision be recorded on the basis that he considered that the multipliers currently in operation for special responsibility allowances should be reduced).

DSFRA/98. The Accountabilities, Roles And Responsibilities of Members of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (DSFRA/09/11) to which was appended a document setting out information on the accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of a fire and rescue authority Member. The document was based upon one currently in use by the Wiltshire and Swindon Fire and Rescue Authority and was intended to serve a number of purposes including general enhancement of Member engagement, compliance with best practice as required by the Annual Governance Statement and succession planning by assisting constituent authorities when determining appointments to this Authority.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the document attached to report DSFRA/09/11 and setting out the accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of a Member of the Authority be approved;
- (b) that the document be circulated to constituent authorities and used by the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk in discussing, with the political group leaders of constituent authorities, potential appointments to the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority.

DSFRA/99. South West Regional Management Board

The Authority received the Minutes of the meeting of the South West Regional Management Board held on 23 March 2009 which had considered, amongst other things:

- a Highlight report summarising progress on projects being supported by the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP) and by workstreams addressing issues on a regional basis;
- a report on a revised Regional Business Plan 2009-11;
- the third edition of the Regional newsletter produced to raise awareness of regional collaboration;
- a progress report on the development of a regional climate change strategy; and
- a proposed Treasury Management Policy for the Board.

In particular the Authority considered the following recommendations from the Board:

- “(a) that each individual fire and rescue authority in the region be asked to encourage the signing of the e-petition currently posted on the official website of the Prime Minister and advocating continued disapplication of the Directive to the retained duty system (Highlight Report - Minute RMB/40 refers);
- (b) that individual South West Fire and Rescue Authorities be encouraged to nominate their own Member champion for climate change (Regional Climate Change Strategy Minute RMB/43 refers).”

In relation to the first issue, the Chairman reported that, at a meeting of the European Commission held on 29 April 2009, talks aimed at finding a solution to the proposal to remove the opt-out clause to the Working Time Directive had broken down as differences in views from EU countries were too great. Consequently, the proposal to remove the opt-out clause would be formally axed in May following which the Commission would decide how to proceed and whether to re-table any of the proposals.

RESOLVED

- (a) that Councillor Martin Leaves be appointed as the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Member Champion for climate change until the next Annual Meeting of the Authority;
- (b) that, subject to (a) above, the Minutes of the meeting of the South West Regional Management Board held on 23 March 2009 be noted.

DSFRA/100. Chairman's Announcements

The Authority received, for information, a schedule of activities undertaken by the Chairman on its behalf since the last meeting.

DSFRA/101. Chief Fire Officer's Announcements

The Chief Fire Officer reported for information on:-

- two fire fatalities that had occurred since the last meeting of the Authority. Both involved elderly males living in bungalows, one of which had a working smoke alarm fitted. There were a number of contributory and complex factors involved in both cases and the Service was looking to work in partnership with other agencies to develop a multi-agency referral programme to better target and cater for vulnerable groups;
- measures being taken by the Service both to brief staff on the current situation in relation to Swine flu and to ensure business continuity in the event of a subsequent pandemic;
- his successful nomination to the office of President of the Chief Fire Officers Association during 2011/12 and the potential benefits that should accrue to the Authority as a result of this.

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.31hours.