

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

29 JUNE 2015

1. **GOVERNANCE OF THE AUTHORITY 2015/2016**

Report of the Clerk.

RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 THAT the proposed revisions to the Constitution as referred to in this report and as set out in Book 2 to the agenda, including the terms of reference of committees and panels, be approved;
- 1.2 THAT member role descriptions as set out in Appendix 2 be approved;
- 1.3 THAT the calendar of meetings for 2015/2016 as set out in Appendix 3 be approved;
- 1.4 THAT no percentage increase be made in members' allowances in 2015/16 by way of indexing or otherwise;
- 1.5 THAT the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2015/16 as set out in Part 6 of the Constitution be approved;
- 1.6 THAT in the light of the current financial situation, no action be taken for the time being with regard to convening an independent remuneration panel to review the members' allowances scheme and that the situation be reviewed in 12 months' time;
- 1.7 THAT the Clerk be authorised to make any necessary consequential amendments to other constitutional documents in the light of decisions made with regard to governance arrangements for 2015/16.
- 1.8 THAT the Monitoring Officer and the Clerk undertake a further review of the Constitution and, if appropriate, submit a report to the Authority in September, 2015.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted for the Authority to determine its governance arrangements for 2015/16 and approve the review of its Constitution.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Authority at its meeting held on 24th June, 2013, approved the full adoption of its Constitution. The Constitution set out how the Authority would operate, how decisions would be made and the procedures that would be followed to ensure that these were efficient, transparent and accountable to local citizens.
- 3.2 The Constitution, as periodically amended by the Authority, prescribes the issues that the Authority should address at its Annual Meeting in terms of the identification of the person(s) or bodies it wishes to carry out its function and the terms of reference for those persons and bodies.
- 3.3 This report has been prepared to support members in approving its review of the Constitution and the political balance of committees, panels and other fora for the 2015/2016 Municipal Year; to assign members to those roles and bodies; and to consider and approve the proposed programme of meetings and the Scheme of Members' Allowances.
- 3.4 A diagram showing the proposed governance structure for 2015/16 is set out at Appendix 1 and the proposed terms of reference of the various bodies are set out in The Constitution included as Book 2 to the Agenda.
- 3.5 In accordance with Article 1, The Constitution and Article 16, Review and Revision of the Constitution, a review has taken place to ensure clarity in how the Authority operates and makes its decisions in line with the purpose set out in Article 1, section 1.2. This review has been undertaken in consultation with the Chair, Brigade Managers and Statutory Officers and proposes a number of changes and amendments, which aim to add further clarity to the role of the Authority.
- 3.6 A detailed breakdown of these proposed changes and amendments are set out below. In addition, the opportunity is being taken to update certain parts of the Authority's Constitution where change is required as a result of legislation, policy development or custom and practice. Where these changes are a direct result of the decisions of the Authority as a consequence of the establishment of the Strategic Enabling Team and the separation of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer functions (see Minutes Nos. 44/14 (21 July 2014) and 22/15 (16 February 2015) or are attributable to spelling or grammatical corrections the actual changes are not highlighted within this report.

3.7 Article 4 - Matters for The Authority

The following amendments and or additions are proposed for Matters for the Authority:-

Section 4.2.1. Governance

- 3.7.1 On the 16th February 2015, the Authority noted the new regulations to set up a Pensions Board and agreed for the Audit Committee to have delegated responsibility for managing and administrating the scheme. This new responsibility has been added to Article 4 – Matter for the Authority, section 4.2.1 as set out below and is also detailed in the Audit Committee terms of reference in Article 8.

“To ensure compliance in the management and administration of the Pensions Board”.

Section 4.2.2 Finance and Land Matters

- 3.7.2 (a) It is proposed to increase the amount the Authority approves in relation to the procurement process where tenders are in excess of £100,000, to ***‘in excess of £250,000’***. In the last financial year 27 of 48 contracts approved by the Authority were between £100,000 and £250,000, the majority being for goods and services of a day to day nature, or as part of planned works and as such present a limited risk in terms of the nature of the contract being let.

The proposed limit of £250,000 is common across the majority of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Services and allows for a more flexible and responsive approach to progressing the procurement process. These proposals would enable the Strategic Enabler – Finance and Resources to approve all contracts up to £250,000 in line with procurement standing order 1/8. The Authority would maintain awareness of all contracts let by WMFRA through the normal reporting process.

All relevant procurement standing orders and financial regulations would be updated following approval of the proposals. This proposed change will also be reflected in the terms of reference for the Executive Committee.

- 3.7.2 (b) It is proposed that Matters for the Authority, Finance section contains an additional function in the approval of commissioning arrangements as set out below:

“Approval of commissioning arrangements in excess of £250,000”

This inclusion will enable the Authority to be prepared for considering and approving the development of such arrangements in the future delivery of services to the community. This approach is aligned to our commitment in The Plan 2015-2018 of making greater savings whilst retaining the services we provide to the community.

Section 4.2.3 Human Resources

- 3.7.3 It is proposed to remove the first bullet point in this section:
- (i) “Approval of any changes in staffing models, structures and pay and conditions of service, where there is a significant impact upon a group defined by one or more of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010”.

The Service has a robust Equality and Diversity Policy in place which identifies its responsibilities and sets out the statutory requirements, rights and responsibilities of West Midlands Fire Service as a service provider and employer as required by legislation. The removal of this bullet point refocuses the responsibility of the Service and its officers in dealing with such matters as set out in standing orders 2/13, Equality Policy and 2/14 Equality Impact Assessment. This also allows the refocus of this section on overseeing human resources processes with regards to Principal Officers as well as fire fighter pension appeals.

Section 4.2.4 Service Delivery

- 3.7.4 It is proposed to remove the following bullet and sub sections:
- (ii) Approval of ‘The Plan’ (the Authority’s strategic planning document), including:
- The number and location of fire stations.
 - The type, number and location of appliances on fire stations.
 - The setting of the operating establishment of rider staff.
 - Approval of operational work patterns.
 - Approval of operational targets in relation to risk-based attendance times.

This will be replaced with:

“Any significant changes, which fundamentally change the priorities set out in The Plan”.

This statement provides (as reflected later in proposed changes to Articles 15 and Scheme of Delegations) a more flexible approach to managing potential change in the organisation, within the priorities and standards set out in The Plan, Community Safety Strategy and Service Delivery Model.

3.8 **Article 6 - Executive Committee**

The following additions and/or amendments are proposed for Article 6, Executive Committee Terms of Reference:

- (a) It is proposed to re instigate the role of the committee as set out below:

To deal with all matters of an urgent nature which in the opinion of the Clerk/Monitoring Officer, cannot reasonably be delayed until the next ordinary meeting of the Authority or appropriate committee.

This change is proposed as a result of proposals to remove the Chair’s Committee as set out in section 3.12 of this report. It is in keeping with the general role of an Executive Committee and aligns to Part 4, section 17 of this Constitution, Dealing with Urgent Matters.

- (b) Proposed changes highlighted earlier in respect of the procurement process in this report against Article 4, Finance and Land Matters, will also be reflected in this Article 6.
- (c) To add clarity to the last role reference in the committee terms of reference, where the salary of Principal Officers is subject to a two track (national and local) approach, it is proposed to add the wording as highlighted below making reference to the gold book scheme of conditions:

To consider and make recommendations to the Authority on the conditions of service and salary of the posts of Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer; taking into consideration the Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service as set out by the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services

3.9 **Article 7 – Scrutiny Committee**

In future the Scrutiny Committee will undertake a maximum, rather than a minimum, of two reviews each year. This is to enable members to give the appropriate time and consideration to the issues under review. It is not proposed to make any other changes in respect of the Committee.

3.10 **Article 8 - Audit Committee**

- (a) The terms of reference for the Audit Committee have been amended to reflect those set out in CIPFA guidelines.
- (b) An additional reference in respect of the Pensions Board has been added to recognise the role of the committee in managing and administering the Pensions Scheme as delegated by the Authority, as highlighted earlier in this report against Article 4, Governance.

3.11 **Article 10 - Appointments Committee**

- (a) On 14th April 2014, the Authority approved the grievance process (in respect of a Brigade Manager and Chief Fire Officer) establishing a Chair's Committee to deal with all matters of an urgent nature which, in the opinion of the Clerk/Monitoring Officer, could not be reasonably delayed until the next ordinary meeting of the Authority. It is proposed that the Appointments Committee now adopt this responsibility in its terms of reference as follows:

“Following the consideration of a grievance, in respect of the CFO, by the Monitoring Officer and the appropriate application of the procedure set out in the relevant scheme of conditions, in line with the Association of Principal Fire Officer (APFO) guidance and authority standing orders:

- To consider any appeal arising by way of a review of the previous decision”

This additional role aligns to the current responsibility of the Appointments Committee in considering and making recommendation to the Authority on the dismissal or other disciplinary action, in respect of the Chief Fire Officer and as such;

- (b) It is proposed to amend this existing role in the committee terms of reference to take into account the above addition and provide clarity in the approach to be taken. The amended reference is as follows:

“To oversee, consider and, where appropriate, make a recommendation to the Authority on dismissal in respect of the Chief Fire Officer, following the appropriate application of the procedure set out in the relevant scheme of conditions, in line with APFO guidance and Authority Standing orders”

3.12 Chair’s Committee

It is proposed to disestablish this Committee in line with the proposed changes to the Executive Committee terms of reference (Article 6) and the amendment and proposed new role additions for the Appointments Committee (Article 10).

3.13 Article 14 - Decision Making

It is proposed that section 14.5 (a), Decision Making by Officers, be amended slightly to add more clarity and align with the proposed changes in Article 4.2.4, Service Delivery. Currently this section reads:

- (a) concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service, including the temporary deployment of resources;

It is proposed this is slightly amended as follows:

- (a) concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service, including varying the deployment of resources in order to ensure the effective delivery of The Plan;

Article 14 also sets out an explanatory note for the Authority on the Business Planning Process. The last sentence in the second paragraph detailed that the Authority would ‘approve The Plan and Community Safety Strategy annually in April’. However, this is a repetition of the approval sought from Authority around the priorities, outcomes and objectives of The Plan in the annual February budget setting meeting. It is therefore proposed that the reference to reporting to Authority again in April is removed.

3.14 **Part 3 - Scheme of Delegations**

The following amendments and/or additions are proposed to the Delegations to the Chief Fire Officer in section 3:

- (a) To remove the term 'day to day' in section 3.1 and amend 3.1 (a) as highlighted out below:

“(a) concerned with maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Service, including varying the deployment of resources in order to ensure the effective delivery of The Plan”.

In line with the amendments proposed in Articles 4 (4.2.4) and 14 (14.5), this slight change provides more clarity around the matters delegated to the Chief Fire Officer in the delivery of The Plan and aligns to these other proposed changes.

3.15 **Member role descriptions**

The adoption of member role descriptions helps to define key roles and responsibilities and assists with any future reviews of remuneration. Portfolios for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority and the Scrutiny Committee are set out in Appendix 2, together with a role description for members of the Joint Consultative Panel.

3.16 **Programme of Meetings**

A proposed programme of meetings for 2015/2016 is attached as Appendix 3.

3.17 **Members' Allowances Scheme**

3.17.1 In accordance with Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations), the Authority is required to make and approve a scheme of the payments of members' allowances each year.

3.17.2 The current scheme provides for an increase in members' allowances with effect from 1 April in 2009, 2010 and 2011, in line with agreed pay awards to NJC Local Government Services. The Regulations provide that the authority must not rely on indexing for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel (IRP) on the application of an index to its scheme.

3.17.3 There was no pay award to NJC and Local Government Services in 2010/11 or 2011/12 and members' allowances were not therefore increased. The scheme does not allow for indexing beyond 1 April 2011 and an Independent Remuneration Panel would usually be convened to review the members' allowances scheme. In 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, in view of the continuing difficult financial situation faced by the Authority, it was agreed to defer reconsideration of the scheme and to review the situation in 12 months' time. There have been minimal increases in local government pay, however, in view of the continuing financial stringency, it is proposed to affirm the stance taken last year and to defer any review of the scheme for a further twelve months.

3.17.4 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new local standards framework and replaces independent members of the Standards Committee with an 'independent person'. Independent persons are entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances as appropriate.

3.17.5 A copy of the members' allowances scheme is contained within the Constitution.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

4.1 In preparing this report, an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report invites the Authority to determine its decision making and governance arrangements for the coming year taking into account the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act, 1972 and the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Provision is made in the Authority's budget to meet costs associated with the operation of the Authority's decision making structures and the payment of members' allowances.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Constitution

Report/Minute of the Authority on Pensions Board – 16 February 2015

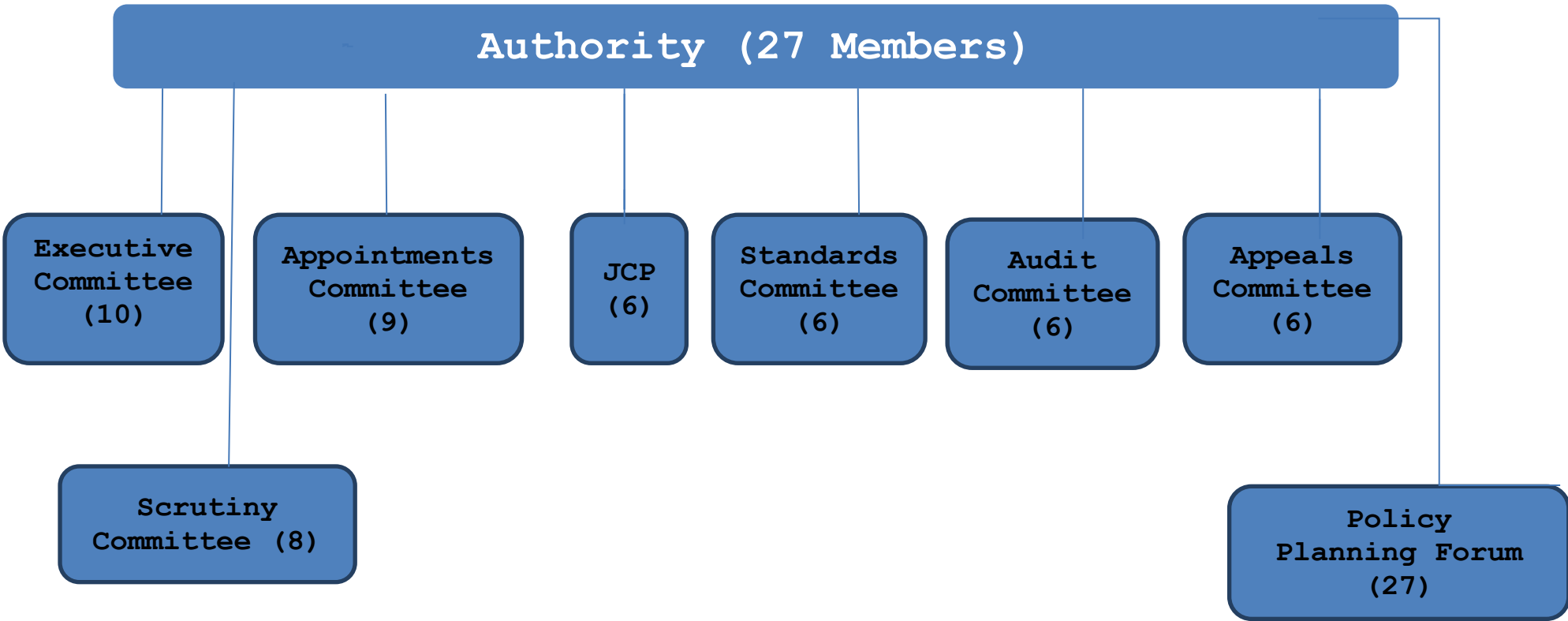
Report/Minute of the Authority on Grievance Process – 14 April 2015

Review of 14/15 Contracts Approved

Gold Book Scheme of Conditions and APFO guidance

KAREN GOWREESUNKER
CLERK

The contact name for this report is Rosemary Jones, telephone number 0121 569 3896.



MEMBER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS 2015/2016

Chair of the Authority

To provide overall political leadership and strategic policy direction to the Authority.

To ensure continuous improvement in service delivery and the implementation of best practice through the application of Authority policy and all relevant legislation, regulations, directives and statutory requirements affecting the work of the Authority.

To chair the Executive Committee and Appointments Committee and any other meetings as required by the Authority;

To serve as a representative on other bodies as nominated by the Authority.

To represent the Authority at any meetings as may be required from time to time in connection with the work of the Authority at local, regional, national or international level.

To take overall political responsibility within the Authority for:

- Corporate Planning, the Corporate Strategy, the Annual Service Plan and The Plan;
- Policy and budgetary strategy formulation;
- Modernisation issues;
- Local, regional, national and international issues;
- Health and Safety;
- Implementing E-Governance (IEG) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- Corporate Risk Management and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (The Community Safety Strategy);
- Procurement;
- Press and media relations and the promotion of the image of the Authority;
- Civic and ceremonial issues;
- Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality;
- Any other initiatives as from time to time may be adopted by or imposed on the Authority.

To oversee the efficient and effective conduct of business within the Authority and to work with other Elected Members on issues that cut across or fall within the terms of reference or portfolios of other Members, Committees or Panels.

To ensure the proper implementation of decisions of the Authority and its Committees and to ensure that due consideration is given to any recommendations arising from those Committees.

To ensure the involvement of local people and communities in the decision making processes of the Authority, as necessary.

To champion the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct throughout the Authority.

To undertake his/her duties in accordance with the Authority's Code of Conduct and any other policies, procedures or protocols which may be adopted by the Authority from time to time.

Vice-Chair of the Authority

To support and assist the Chair of the Authority to provide overall political leadership and strategic policy direction to the Authority.

To support continuous improvement in service delivery and the implementation of best practice through the application of Authority policy and all relevant legislation, regulations, directives and statutory requirements affecting the work of the Authority.

To chair the Authority, relevant Committees or other meetings as may be required, in the absence or inability to act of the Chair of the Authority;

To serve as a representative on other bodies as nominated by the Authority.

To represent the Authority at any meetings as required from time to time in connection with the work of the Authority at local, regional, national or international level.

To support and assist the Chair of the Authority to fulfil his/her overall political management responsibilities within the Authority for:

- Corporate Planning, the Corporate Strategy, the Annual Service Plan and The Plan;
- Policy and budgetary strategy formulation;
- Modernisation issues;
- Local, regional, national and international issues;
- Health and Safety;
- Implementing E-Governance (IEG) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- Risk Management and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (Community Safety Strategy);
- Procurement;
- Press and media relations and the promotion of the image of the Authority;
- Civic and ceremonial issues;
- Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equality;
- Any other initiatives as from time to time may be adopted by or imposed on the Authority.

To take lead responsibility on any specific initiatives that may be required from time to time by the Authority, the Chair of the Authority or one of its Committees or Panels.

To assist and support the Chair in the efficient and effective conduct of business within the Authority and to work with other Elected Members on issues that cut across or fall within the terms of reference or portfolios of other Members, Committees or Panels.

To assist in ensuring the proper implementation of decisions of the Authority and its Committees and to ensure that due consideration is given to any recommendations arising from those Committees.

To assist in ensuring the involvement of local people and communities in the decision-making processes of the Authority, as necessary.

To undertake his/her duties in accordance with the Authority's Code of Conduct and any other policies, procedures or protocols which may be adopted by the Authority from time to time.

Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

To lead the work of the Committee, in conjunction with the Vice-Chair.

To agree with the Committee at the start of each year a programme of reviews.

To maintain the independence of the Committee and ensure that scrutiny develops as an open and transparent process.

To chair meetings of the Committee, ensuring that topics for review are properly scoped and that reviews are completed within agreed timescales.

To ensure that scrutiny is carried out on a non-party political basis and that all members of the Committee participate in the work of the Committee.

To ensure that recommendations from the Committee are evidence based and objective, and based on SMART principles (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely).

To present the outcomes and recommendations of reviews to the Executive Committee of the Authority.

To oversee the implementation of recommendations that are accepted by the Executive Committee.

To ensure that members of the Committee have access to training and development on the principles of good scrutiny, equalities and diversity and relevant human resources issues.

To ensure that the Committee acts as a 'critical friend' to non-scrutiny members and officers of the Authority.

To have responsibility, in consultation with the Strategic Enabler Finance and Resources, for the Committee's scrutiny budget.

Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

To chair the Committee in the absence of the Chair.

To represent the Chair in her/his absence at other Authority meetings.

To support the Chair in review meetings by assisting in the development of appropriate evidence-based recommendations.

Responsibilities of Elected Members of the Joint Consultative Panel

1. Background

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority is a statutory body that has a legal duty to provide services as defined by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 through West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS).

The Fire Authority is the employer for WMFS and the supervisory body which ensures that WMFS performs efficiently and in the best interest of the public and community it serves.

In order to have in place a formal consultation mechanism, WMFS in consultation with the Trade Unions/Representative Bodies has developed the Employee Relations Framework. Included within the policy is a constitution for a Joint Consultative Committee and a re-established Joint Consultative Panel.

The Employee Relations Framework has been based on the Joint Protocol published by the National Joint Council (NJC), the model procedure in the Grey Book and guidelines produced by ACAS. It has been jointly agreed and will govern the relationship between WMFS and its recognised Trade Unions/Representative Bodies. It is not legally binding, but relies on all parties to work within a spirit of co-operation.

The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meetings between managers and Trades Union Officials will take place initially monthly but depending on the needs of the organisation this may be reviewed. This will support the employee involvement process but it does not detract from a manager's responsibility to make decisions. It defines the process for getting employees views prior to decisions being made.

The Joint Consultative Panel provides an opportunity for employee representatives and the employing Authority to comment on matters relating to the conditions of employment of employees of the Service. It also provides a forum for discussion to assist in the consultation process.

2. Purpose

The Joint Consultative Panel provides a means where elected members of WMFRA, Principal Officers of WMFS and Trade Union/ Representative Body representatives who are representatives of WMFS employees, come together on a regular basis to discuss issues of mutual concern. This panel may have items referred to it from the Joint Consultative Committee as part of the negotiation or consultation process. However, a majority of the items considered will be for consultation.

This panel will consider and make recommendations on:-

- any relevant matter referred to it by the Service or by the relevant employee organisations.
- any Employee Relation issues which may arise. (In these circumstances the issue must have been considered at Joint Consultative Committee and if there is an outstanding dispute, as per the Terms of Reference, the dispute may be registered with the organisation).
- the application of the terms and conditions of service for employees.

The Joint Consultative Panel supports and governs the principles set out in the “Working Together” A Joint Protocol for Good Industrial Relations in the Fire and Rescue Service document.

The National Joint Council (NJC) recognises that Fire and Rescue Service managers and Trade Union representatives must work together for the benefit of the service, its employees, and local communities. WMFS supports the application of these principles for recognised Representative Bodies.

The principles within the Working Together document identify the need for joint commitment from Trade Union Officials and the organisation by defining how the individual representatives will engage and work together to the success of the business.

3. Consultation

Consultation: For the benefit of this process consultation (as defined in the Employee Relations Framework) goes beyond communication and involves managers actively seeking and then taking account of, the views of employees’ representatives before making a decision. Managers are obliged to seek acceptable solutions to problems through a genuine exchange of views and information.

The responsibility for decisions remains at all times with the employer and does not remove the right of managers to manage and make the final decision. Managers must be aware of the need to consult and Trade Union/ Representative Body representatives must be aware of the need to respond.

Items may be referred to the Joint Consultative Panel as 'a failure to consult'. The Joint Consultative Panel needs only to consider if appropriate consultation has taken place and not what the outcome of the consultation should be.

The Trades Union will be responsible for identifying where they believe the lack of consultation has taken place. The Strategic Enabler People Support Services or his/her delegated representative will provide an audit trail demonstrating the consultation that has taken place and its appropriateness. It is important to stress that a 'failure to consult' should not be considered by the Joint Consultative Panel if it is clear that a consultation process has been used but the Trades Unions/ Representative Bodies have chosen not to attend or did not send a deputy.

4. Negotiation

Negotiation: For the benefit of this process negotiation is defined in the Employee Relations Framework as the process by which employers and Trade Union/ Representative Body representatives seek to reach agreement through collective bargaining. It requires an agreement to be reached. Collective bargaining is the process by which employers and recognised Trades Unions/Representative Bodies seek to reach agreement on issues such as pay and terms and conditions of employment.

5. Process for Failure to Consult

In the case of consultation, if Trade Union/ Representative Body representatives believe there has not been appropriate consultation they can refer the matter to the Joint Consultative Panel. However, in doing so Trades Unions/Representative Bodies must clearly demonstrate how they have worked with the Service to try and resolve the dispute prior to referral to the Joint Consultative Panel. The recommendation of the Joint Consultative Panel will only relate to whether appropriate consultation has taken place.

The information relating to the 'Failure to Consult' will be distributed to Joint Consultative Panel members prior to the meeting. The Trade Union/ Representative Body representative will present the reasons why they have raised the dispute and the management representative will clarify the consultation process used.

Deliberation will take place, see section 7. The process for consultation is defined within the Employee Relations Framework.

6. Process for Failure to Agree

In cases of negotiation items will be referred to the Joint Consultative Panel if the Joint Consultative Committee has failed to reach an agreement. However, in doing so Trades Unions/Representative Bodies must clearly demonstrate how they have worked with the Service to try and resolve the dispute prior to referral to the Joint Consultative Panel. In this situation the Joint Consultative Panel will need to consider the 'failure to agree' and make a recommendation which would be considered by the Authority or Chief Fire Officer prior to it becoming contractual.

The information relating to the 'Failure to Agree' will be distributed to Joint Consultative Panel members prior to the meeting. The Trade Union/ Representative Body representative will present the reasons why they have raised the dispute and the management representative will be given the opportunity to clarify why it was necessary to make that decision taking into consideration the needs of the organisation to provide a quality service as efficiently and effectively as possible contributing to making the community safer.

7. The Elected Member group will adjourn to consider the presentations made. If further information is required both parties will be called back to the Elected Member group even if the query relates to one side. The Elected Member group will then give their decision on their recommendation back to the Service.

The Elected Members may be assisted by a Technical Advisor. The advisor and the representative from the Clerk to the Authority will adjourn with the panel. The Technical Advisor and Clerk are not part of the decision making process. Their role is to give advice on the Service's policy, process or interpretation of legislation.

The presenter of the management case must not be the advisor to the panel.

8. Declaration of Interests

Pecuniary and other interests should be declared at the beginning of each meeting under 'Declaration of interests'. Where a member has a personal interest in the outcome of any item referred to the Joint Consultative Panel they should declare this at the beginning of the meeting under the standing item on the agenda.

9. Confidentiality

Elected members are bound by the Model Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct should be considered prior to any discussions or conversations with Trades Unions representative outside of the Joint Consultative Panel. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

10. Decision Making

The General Principles underlying with the Code of Conduct outline the considerations for elected members the when making decisions. Elected members should consider carefully how their decisions might affect the community, service and other stakeholders/partners. Members should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.

11. General

Elected members have a responsibility to actively promote good employment relations and lead by example through their actions and conduct. Individual Fire Authority Members will actively promote good employment relations through their own actions and behaviours in accordance with the members' code of conduct and the Services core values in respect of their communications with the Trades Unions/ Representative Bodies.

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2015/16**

Date	Time	Meeting
2015		
Monday 29 June	11.00 am	Authority [Annual Meeting] [political groups at 10 am]
Monday 17 August	10.30 am	Scrutiny Committee
Monday 7 September	9.00 am 10.00 am 10.30 am 1.30 pm	Chair's agenda meeting Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum Audit Committee
Monday 21 September	11.00 am to follow	Authority [political groups at 10 am] Joint Consultative Panel [pre meeting tbc]
Monday 12 October	10.00 am 10.30 am 12.30 pm 12.30 pm	Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum Audit Committee Scrutiny Committee
Monday 9 November	9.00 am 10.00 am 10.30 am 12.30 pm	Chair's agenda meeting Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum Joint Consultative Panel [pre meeting 1 pm]
Monday 16 November	10.30 am	Scrutiny Committee
Monday 23 November	11.00 am	Authority [political groups at 10 am]
Monday 15 December	10.00 am 10.30 am	Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum

2016		
Monday 18 January	10.00 am 10.30 am 12.30 pm	Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum Audit Committee
Monday 1 February	9.00 am 10.00 am 10.30 am To follow	Chair's agenda meeting Executive Committee [non domestic ratepayers consultation meeting] Policy Planning Forum Joint Consultative Panel [pre meeting tbc]
Monday 15 February	11.00 am 12.30 pm	Authority [budget and precept setting] [political groups at 10 am] Scrutiny Committee
Monday 21 March	9.00 am 10.00 am 10.30 am 12.30 pm 12.30 pm	Chair's agenda meeting Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum Audit Committee Scrutiny Committee
Monday 11 April	11.00 am To follow	Authority [political groups at 10 am] Joint Consultative Panel [pre meeting tbc]
Monday 6 June Do we need to do Chair's agenda meeting on 13 June?? and take off here	9.00 am 10.00 am 10.30 am 12.30 pm 12.30 pm	Chair's agenda meeting Executive Committee Policy Planning Forum Audit Committee Scrutiny Committee
NEW MUNICIPAL YEAR Monday 27 June	11.00 am	Authority [Annual Meeting] [political groups at 10 am]

The Standards, Appointments and Appeals Committees will meet as and when required.