



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 22 June 2022, 10:30

Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Vice-Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr D Boatright, Mr B Brookes, Mr D Chambers, Mr B Clayton, Mr A Ditta, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs K Hey, Mrs E Marshall, Ms J Monk, Mr R J Morris, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mrs D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

360 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Mr C B Taylor be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

361 Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Mr R J Phillips be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year, to hold office until his successor becomes entitled to act.

362 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Morehead, Cllr K Guthrie and Cllr N McVey.

363 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

364 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed Members that he had attended the Fire Commission discussion on the White Paper and the Strategic Fire Alliance meeting in Shropshire.

[Cllr R Phillips entered the meeting at 10.39am].

Congratulations were passed to John Chance from Ewyas Harold who had retired after over 45 years of service.

Cllr J Hardwick was welcomed to the meeting who was attending as a member of the public prior to being appointed onto the Fire Authority.

365 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

366 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 15 February 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

367 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

A report was presented by the Head of Legal Services to consider the allocation of Committee seats to political groups in accordance with the requirements for political balance, the appointment of Members to those committees and appointments to outside bodies.

Since the publication of this report, Members were informed that due to a recent review of the political balance within Herefordshire Council, it was likely the Conservative Group would decrease by 1 Member and the Herefordshire Alliance would increase by 1 Member on the Authority and on the Policy and Resources Committee. Until formal notice was received, Members were asked to approve the appendices as set out in the report and any update would be presented at the next Authority meeting.

RESOLVED that:

i) the allocation of Committee seats to political groups as set out at Appendix 1 be agreed;

ii) the current chairmanship and membership of Committees, as set out in Appendix 2, remain unchanged for 2022/2023;

iii) Cllrs S Bowen, E Marshall and N McVey be reappointed Member

Champions of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;

iv) Cllr B Clayton be reappointed as the Member Champion on the Health & Safety Committee;

v) Cllr B Brookes be appointed as Fire Cadets' Member Champion;

vi) the current practice for representation and voting on the Local Government Association as set out in Appendix 2 be continued; and

vii) the place and vote on the Local Government Association Fire Commission continues to be exercised by the Chairman of the Authority.

368 Provisional Financial Out-turn 2021-22

The Treasurer presented Members with a report to receive provisional financial results for 2021-22, approve final transfers to/from reserves, approve the reallocation of reserves, review Treasury Management activities for 2021-22 and confirm compliance with the Prudential Code indicators.

Members were informed that the Provisional Financial Results, the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators normally come under the terms of reference of the Policy and Resources Committee, however because they required attention between meetings of that committee, they were considered by the Full Authority.

Members were informed that the financial year 2021-22 saw the continued impacts of Covid, economic impacts of exit from the European Union and latterly the impact of conflict in Ukraine. An interim financial position was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in May and identified a significant positive financial impact of a large late grant payment, and the Committee made recommendations as to its use.

Following a brief outline by the Treasurer of the reserves held, Members were pleased to note the details and approved the reallocation as stated in the report.

Members noted the funding had exceeded the budget by £1.493m which was attributable to additional and unexpected grants being paid at the end of (or after the end of) the financial year.

Members noted that the Policy and Resources Committee had recommended the Business Rate Retail Relief Grant be reserved to meet the inflationary pressures on the major building programme to ensure the works at Hereford, Redditch, Broadway and North Herefordshire training

facility could be completed.

Finally the Treasurer confirmed that the Prudential Indicators for 2020-21 were within the limits set by the Authority and no matters required further action.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

- i) Notes the provisional financial results for 2021-22;***
- ii) Notes the transfers from Earmarked Reserves approved in accordance with the Reserves Strategy;***
 - a) £132,400 from the Organisational Excellence Reserve;***
 - b) £67,286 from the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP) Reserve;***
 - c) £38,495 from the Broadway Fire Station Reserve;***
 - d) £5,000 from the On-Call Recruitment Reserve;***
 - e) £277,141 from the Property Maintenance Reserve;***
 - f) £7,910 from the Pensions Reserve;***
 - g) £144,673 from the Protection Grants Reserve;***
 - h) £48,035 from the Safety Initiatives Reserve; and***
 - i) £51,154 from the Taxation Income Guarantee (TIG) Grant Reserve.***
- iii) Approves transfers to Earmarked Reserves as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee:***
 - a) £75,696 to the Safety Initiatives Reserve; and***
 - b) £1,168,801 to the Capital Projects Reserve.***
- iv) Approves additional transfers to Earmarked Reserves as set out below:***
 - a) £192,675 to the Protection Grants Reserve;***
 - b) £115,000 to the ICT Replacements Reserve;***
 - c) £51,850 to the Pensions Reserve; and***
 - d) £366,468 to the Capital Projects Reserve.***
- v) Approves the closure of the DCP Change Reserve and the***

transfer of the small remaining balance to the Safety Initiatives Reserve.

vi) Notes that the Treasurer will certify the 2022-22 Statement of Accounts, in accordance within the regulatory time-scale.

vii) Notes that the Audit of the accounts will be undertaken by Grant Thornton LLP; and

viii) Confirms that the Prudential Indicators for 2021-22 were within the limits set by the Authority and no matters require further action

369 Annual Service Review 2021-22

The Assistant Director of Prevention presented Members with the Annual Service Review 2020-21, which was a look back at the range of work undertaken over the last year, including headline activities and incident statistics, to adopt and approve for publication on the Service's website.

Upon the Vice-Chairman's request, the Head of Legal Services agreed to send the Review out to all Councils and Parish Councils for circulation across the two Counties.

RESOLVED that the draft Annual Service Review 2021-22 be approved for publication on the Service website.

370 Annual Service Plan 2022-23

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the Annual Service Plan 2022-23, which sets out the Service's key priorities for the coming year arranged under the main CRMP headings of Response, Protection, Prevention, Valuing Our Workforce and Value for Money, to adopt and approve for publication on the Service's website.

Upon the Vice-Chairman's request, the Head of Legal Services agreed to send the Review out to all Councils and Parish Councils for circulation across the two Counties.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority approves the draft Annual Service Plan 2022-23 for publication on the Service website.

371 Fire Reform White Paper

The Head of Legal Services informed Members of the publication of the Home Office consultation on the white paper "Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service".

Members were invited to discuss the proposals and the views expressed

would then be collated and included in a formal response on behalf of the Authority. The closing date for responses was 26 July 2022.

Members were also asked to contact the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or appropriate Group Leader with any specific issues they may wish to raise for consideration. In view of the timescales involved, it was proposed that it be delegated to officers to finalise the response in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Leaders. Members could also submit individual responses to the white paper if they so wished.

Following an in depth discussion of the proposals, a formal response was formulated, a copy of which is attached.

[Cllr D Chambers left the meeting at 12.18pm and returned at 12.21pm].

[Cllr D Boatright left the meeting at 12.25pm and returned at 12.29pm].

RESOLVED that a formal response on behalf of the Authority to the white paper reflecting the views expressed by Members be delegated to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Leaders.

372 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update May 2022

The Assistant Director of Prevention updated Members on the HMICFRS Improvement Plan following the inspection report dated 15 December 2021.

[Cllr R Morris and Cllr E Eyre left the meeting at 12.27pm and returned at 12.32pm].

Members noted the actions taken for all 22 specific areas for improvement identified by HMICFRS and that all evidence of change would be robust for evaluation and audit. Once scrutiny was complete, updated versions of the templates would be publicly available on the Service website each quarter.

RESOLVED that the Authority notes the actions agreed to address the HMICFRS Improvement Plan.

373 Property Update

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer Ade Elliott presented Members with an update on the current property programme.

Members noted that there are currently four new build schemes being

planned/developed, including; Broadway Fire Station, Redditch Fire Station, Hereford Fire Station, and a Strategic Training Facility in North Herefordshire. Site disposal of the former fire station sites at Windsor Street Bromsgrove, Bewdley, and Stourport have been completed and Kidderminster continues to be progressed.

Members were informed that recent reports to the Policy and Resources Committee had referenced the UK construction tender price index, and the associated inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector. Taking this into account the Treasurer was building in contingency funds in anticipation of the current capital build programme. Members would be updated as the projects develop, notably Broadway, Redditch and Hereford fire station builds.

RESOLVED that the property update and progress is noted.

374 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 20 April 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 20 April 2022 be received and noted.

375 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

No Minutes Taken

376 Retirement of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that Deputy Chief Fire Officer Keith Chance was retiring on 16 August 2022 after over 30 years' service.

Members congratulated Guy and Ade on their promotions and thanked Keith for his support and calmness when presenting reports. Members then wished Keith a wonderful retirement.

Pending a review of structures in early 2023, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Guy Palmer had been designated as acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Area Commander Ade Elliott had been temporarily promoted to Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

377 Response to Fire Reform Consultation

See Appendix "Response to Fire Reform Consultation" in the Document Library on the website.

The Meeting ended at: 12:51

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman