



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 12 October 2022,10:30

Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Vice-Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Minutes

Members Present: Mr S Bowen, Mr B Brookes, Mr A Ditta, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr J Hardwick, Mr M Hart, Mrs E Marshall, Mr D Morehead, 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

378 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr A Amos, Cllr D Boatright, Cllr D Chambers, Cllr B Clayton, Cllr K Hey, Cllr N McVey and Cllr J Monk.

379 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).

380 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Cllr J Hardwick to his first meeting as an Authority Member

381 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

382 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 22 June 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the

Chairman.

383 Financial Matters

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on the revenue and capital budget for 2022/23, in lieu of the cancelled September Policy and Resources Committee meeting and provided Members with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The MTFP had been updated to reflect the likelihood that staff pay settlements for this year would exceed the 2% previously budgeted. Members recognised that the current national offer of a 5% increase for operational 'Grey Book' staff was below the current rate of inflation but all Members were nonetheless hopeful this would be accepted as fair and reasonable.

Members also discussed the potential future withdrawal of funding for the national resilience urban search & rescue (USAR) capability within Hereford & Worcester and agreed that the Chairman should make representations to our local MPs in support of retaining this function, if and when an announcement is made.

The cumulative effect of the changes to the MTFP were that the Authority is projecting an underlying revenue shortfall of approximately £1m in the next two to three years. Options for addressing this will be brought forward for consideration at a later date.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

- i) Approves re-allocations within the Revenue Budget in Appendix 1, Columns 3 and 4;***
- ii) Approves the holding of the £0.243m potential Revenue underspend until the outcome of national pay awards are known;***
- iii) Approves the revised Capital Budget set out in Appendix 2;***
- iv) Notes the potential for further capital financing under-spending;***
- v) Notes the potential future impacts on the MTFP, but acknowledges the limited certainty at this time; and***
- vi) Notes that further reports will be brought to the Authority and Committees as it emerges.***

384 Review of Committee Seats

The Head of Legal Services presented Members with changes to the

membership of political groups and allocation of committee seats, which had been anticipated but had not taken effect when the Authority last met.

RESOLVED that:

i) the appointment of Cllr J. Hardwick be noted;

ii) the revised allocation of committee seats to political groups as set out in Appendix 1 be approved; and

iii) the updated membership of committees set out in Appendix 2 be noted.

385 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Improvement Plan – Update Q1 2022

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

It was noted that the Authority were still awaiting a return visit from HMICFRS to formally discharge the previous 'cause for concern' in relation to prevention activities, although the necessary actions had been completed several months ago.

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

386 Strategic Fire Alliance Update

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer updated Members on progress against the programme of priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

Members noted that the Alliance would now focus predominately on delivery of the fire control project. In response to Members' questions, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed the intention to deliver a new control system that would be resilient across two separate control centres whilst offering the flexibility to meet any future requirements. Unlike the previous regional fire control project from some years ago, this was about renewing existing systems, not making structural changes to the fire control function.

RESOLVED that progress on the programme to date be noted.

387 2022-23 Performance Report: Q1 (01 April – 30 June 2022)

The Assistant Director (Prevention) presented Members with a summary of the Service's performance for Quarter 1, 2022-23.

In response to questions about on-call availability, the Chief Fire Officer explained that ensuring daytime on-call cover was a challenge faced by fire & rescue services and that on-call availability within Hereford & Worcester was very good in comparison to many.

Responding to a question about the support the Service can provide to ensure fire safety in houses in multiple occupation, the Assistant Director (Prevention) outlined the work being done in collaboration with a range of other community agencies.

It was agreed that all Members would be provided with further details of the 'winter warmth packs' currently being distributed by the Protection Team

RESOLVED that Members note the Q1 2022-23 performance headlines set out in Section 4 of this report, with further details available in Appendix 1. For completeness Appendix 2 also provided detail of Q4 2021-22, a duplicate of data provided in the Annual Service Review 2021-22 presented at the Fire Authority meeting on 22 June 2022.

388 Property Update

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

It was noted that Development Plan proposals for South Worcestershire would shortly be going out to consultation and which were likely to include plans for substantial additional housing development. It was agreed that the Authority should seek additional funding through the Plan process to address the fire risks and any additional demands on the Service arising from such developments.

RESOLVED that:

i) the property update and progress be noted; and

ii) the Authority make any appropriate representations in relation to forthcoming local plans.

389 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 July 2022.

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

390 Urgent Decision Taken

The Monitoring Officer advised Members of an urgent decision that had been taken since the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee in relation to the redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station.

RESOLVED that the decision taken under the Urgent Decisions Procedure to further increase the budget allocation for the redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station, be noted.

391 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following items due to the likelihood that it contains exempt information, namely information relating to the business affairs of another person or organisation, and the press and public are likely to be excluded from the discussion of this item.

392 Broadway Fire Station

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update on the Broadway Fire Station replacement following the budget decision taken under the Urgent Decisions Procedure.

RESOLVED that the increased cost for the redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station be noted.

393 Proposed Interim Changes to Principal Officer Structure

The Chief Fire Officer requested approval from the Authority to make interim changes to the Principal Officer structure in order to ensure appropriate succession planning for senior posts, having regard to potential future retirements..

RESOLVED that the Authority approve the Chief Fire Officer to:

i) Continue with the current Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer in his role until his retirement.

ii) Commence a process to appoint a substantive uniformed

Assistant Chief Fire Officer to fill the current vacant role created by the retirement of Keith Chance.

iii) When the current Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer retires, commence a process through the Fire Authority Appointments Committee, to appoint a substantive Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

iv) In conjunction with ii) above, commence a process to appoint a substantive non-uniformed Director of Prevention.

The Meeting ended at: 12:30

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman