



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 12 September 2023, 10:30

Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Minutes

Members Present: Mrs J Carwardine, Mr D Chambers, Mr D Davies, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr C B Taylor, Mr T Wells

0233 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Boulter, Cllr J Monk and Cllr R Udall.

0234 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0235 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).

0236 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 3 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0237 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 1

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on the revenue and capital budget for 2023/24 and gave an update on Treasury

Management.

Members noted a significant variation to the budget detailed at the Policy and Resources Committee in May where spending slippage in the capital programme had led to a delay in spending and a consequential delay in capital financing costs of £0.250m. It was proposed to use this saving to fund the additional cost of Breathing Apparatus replacement beyond the initial estimate of £1m already provided in reserves. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the delay of the replacement was simply down to lack of technology on the market at the time.

The expected expenditure on reserve funded "Invest to Improve" projects was also noted, in particular that as more projects get underway this estimate would increase during the year.

Members noted that the green book pay award offer which was made on 23 February 2023 had still not been settled.

Members noted the changes to the capital budget since the Authority meeting in June and that the available budget to be spent at the start of 2023/24 was £4.974m.

With regard to Treasury Management, it was noted that the Authority was significantly "under borrowed" to the extent of around £10m. As the Invest to Improve programme progresses, this cash would be used up and additional long term borrowing would be required.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

i) Confirmed the revenue budget allocation adjustments;

ii) Noted the current projection of a £0.250m revenue underspending;

iii) Noted the projected expenditure on "Invest to Improve" projects;

iv) Approved the allocation of the revenue underspend to the Breathing Apparatus project; and

v) Noted the implementation of approved changes to the Capital Budget.

0238 Inclusion of Fire and Rescue Authority employees in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention informed Members of the inclusion of Fire and Rescue Authority employees in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Members agreed that this was a positive move to ensure the public's safety.

RESOLVED that the details of the amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975 be noted, in particular that:

i) all Fire and Rescue Authority employees are now eligible for Standard Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks;

ii) the Service will commence a process of DBS checking for all existing members of staff; and

iii) whilst there is no legal requirement to re-check on a regular basis, the Service will conduct re-checks every five years.

0239 Property update

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the current property programme.

Members were pleased to note the progress with Broadway Fire Station, that it was on target to be completed in January 2024 as per the project programme.

Members noted an alternative site had been identified in Hereford as a potential temporary location and Members would have an update as soon as information was available.

Members were also informed that in the next month there should be positive news with regard to the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility. Since the planning application had been submitted there had been concern in relation to site flood risk. Following extensive discussions an updated flood risk assessment and additional modelling had been submitted to Herefordshire Council and was currently being reviewed.

RESOLVED that the property update and progress of the capital build programme and property maintenance was noted at:

i) Broadway Fire Station

ii) Redditch Fire Station

iii) Hereford Fire Station

iv) North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility

v) Relocation of Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station

vi) Planned and reactive property maintenance

0240 Fire Cadets Annual Review 2022/2023

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention updated Members on the Fire Cadets activity for 2022/2023.

Councillor Bob Brookes, the Fire Authority Fire Cadet Champion, presented awards at the passing out ceremony in May 2023 to those who were nominated for the Highest Achiever, Most Improved and Highest Attendance Awards.

Members were pleased to note that the Mayor of Droitwich for the civic year of 2023/2024, Councillor Kate Fellows, had chosen HWFRS Fire Cadets as one of her Charities.

RESOLVED that the Fire Cadets update for 2022/2023 is noted, in particular:

i) the introduction of the Droitwich Fire Cadets branch in September 2022;

ii) the formulation of the Fire Cadet Executive Committee to provide governance and support; and

iii) that 18 Cadets successfully passed out at a ceremony in May 2023.

0241 2023-24 Performance Report: Q1 (01 April – 30 June 2023)

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented a summary of the Service's performance for Q1, 2023-2024 which included the first quarter of the new attendance reporting measure.

Members' attention was drawn to the incorrect colour coding on the graphs in the Appendix and assured Members that this would be resolved for the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the details of the Q1 2023-24 performance headlines be noted, in particular that:

i) a total of 1,966 incidents overall were attended in Q1 2023-2024 which was an increase of 6% on Q1 2022-2023;

ii) however, Fires (445) were 10% lower than Q1 2022/23 and lower than the five year average of 514;

iii) Special services (558) although higher than the corresponding

quarter of the previous year were still in line with the five year average; and

iv) False alarms (993) had also increased by 14%, which was due mainly to an increase in the number of false alarms with good intent.

The Meeting ended at: 11:50

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman