



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 03 May 2023,10:30

**Chairman: Mr R J Phillips**

**Vice-Chairman: Mr C B Taylor**

## **Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr D Chambers, Mr J Hardwick, Mrs K Hey, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor

### **0222 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Monk, Cllr R Udall and Cllr T Wells.

### **0223 Named Substitutes**

There were no named substitutes.

### **0224 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).

### **0225 Confirmation of Minutes**

***RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 1 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.***

### **0226 Budget Update 2023-24**

The Treasurer updated Members on the 2023/24 Budget following the settlement of the Grey Book Pay Award.

Members were informed of the five changes that had an impact on the budget since the Fire Authority meeting in February. Namely:

- i) Grey Book pay award had been settled at 7% for July 2022 and 5% for July 2023.
- ii) Green Book offer, which was in excess of the original budgetary provision for April 2023 had been rejected, but the cost of this revised offer has been included.
- iii) Retained Business Rate changes.
- iv) Distribution of Grants was slightly different.
- v) New Dimensions USAR grant amendments.

Members were still disappointed that central government were not providing any financial support for the pay award but it was recognised there was little benefit in trying to lobby government again on this point.

Members were advised that whilst it would not be prudent to rely on the use of reserves to close a budget gap in the long term, the planned use to avoid unnecessarily early service impacts, whilst developing a cost reduction plan, could be seen as a sensible use of reserves.

***RESOLVED that the revised budget be approved.***

#### **0227 Pensions Board Update (Fire Pension Schemes)**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented an update on the establishment and activities of the Pensions Board.

Members were pleased to note that there had been no conflicts of interest or breaches reported to The Pensions Regulator.

*[Cllr D Morehead entered the meeting at 10.44am].*

***RESOLVED it be noted that:***

***i) the Pensions Board continues to be compliant with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013;***

***ii) in line with the recommendations of The Pensions Regulator, the Pensions Board now meets four times a year; and***

***iii) progress continues to be made on a range of issues as described in the report.***

#### **0228 Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023/24**

The Treasurer presented the Efficiency and Productivity Plan which was required by standalone Fire Authorities under the National Framework to

be published and submitted to the Home Office by 31 March 2023. This was part of the evidence gathering exercise for the Home Office to demonstrate to HM Treasury that the sector had delivered on commitments.

The Treasurer did not use the Home Office's template as it was felt to be confusing, complicated and did not align with the format of information that Members were used to receiving. This view was also shared with other Fire Treasurers in the region. Following submission of the Plan, the Home Office requested that the template be completed (and made the same request of other Treasurers as well).

Members noted that the template had not been published on the website but was included as an appendix to the report for information.

***RESOLVED that the Committee notes that the Efficiency and Productivity Plan was published on the Authority's website on 31 March 2023.***

#### **0229 Serious Violence Duty Update**

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) provided an overview of the introduction of the Serious Violence Duty and the impact on Fire and Rescue Services.

The Serious Violence Duty came into effect in January 2023, following the government's public consultation in July 2019, to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Members were pleased to note that the Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) was the nominated lead representative for the Service.

***RESOLVED that the introduction of the new Serious Violence Duty and the Fire and Rescue Service involvement was noted.***

#### **0230 Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2022/2023**

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) presented the annual Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022/23 for adoption.

The Statement set out the steps that the Service had taken to prevent modern slavery in its supply chains and own business.

***RESOLVED that the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022/23 be approved and published on the Service's website.***

**0231 2022-23 Performance Report: Q4 (01 January – 31 March 2023)**

The Assistant Chief Officer (Director of Prevention) presented a revised report correcting errors in the original summary of the Service's performance for Quarter 4, 2022-23 that had been published with the agenda.

Members were pleased to note that the total number of incidents had decreased slightly to 1,733 compared to the same quarter of 2021-22 and there had been a significant increase in Home Fire Safety Visits, of which there were 1,878, a 143% increase compared to the same quarter of 2021-22. Inspections of business premises had also increased, 379 were completed compared to 241 in the previous year. This reflected the various restrictions on working arrangements in 2021 following Covid-19.

***RESOLVED that the Q4 2022-23 performance headlines set out in Section 4 of the report, with further details available in Appendix 1, be noted.***

**0232 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Director of Protection and Assets) presented the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since the last update provided on 15 November 2022.

Members noted the current issues under discussion with employee representatives.

***RESOLVED that the following new and existing items currently under discussion by the Joint Consultative Committee be noted:***

- i) Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Contracts/Policy - Outcome of National Review***
- ii) Duty Systems - 12hr days and Day Crewing***
- iii) Fitness and Attendance Management Policies***
- iv) Promotion Processes***
- v) Industrial Action***
- vi) Core Code of Ethics Steering Group***
- vii) Safeguarding Training Competency Framework***
- viii) Time in Motion Review***

**ix) Staff Survey Update**

**x) Property Update**

**xi) Project Updates - National Operational Guidance (NOG), On-Call,  
and Unwanted Fire Signals**

**xii) Mid-term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update**

The Meeting ended at: 11:49

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman