



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 06 March 2024, 10:30

**Chairman: Mr R J Phillips**

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

## **Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr D Boulter, Mr D Davies, Mr A Ditta, Ms J Monk, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr C B Taylor, Mr T Wells

### **0251 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Carwardine, Cllr D Chambers and Cllr D Morehead.

### **0252 Named Substitutes**

Cllr I Hardiman substituted for Cllr D Morehead.

### **0253 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).

### **0254 Confirmation of Minutes**

***RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 14 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.***

### **0255 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 3**

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 the small overspend of £0.027m and that given the small size and the imminence of year end, it was proposed not to make specific decisions about how to fund what will inevitably be a different figure at outturn. Members also noted the error in paragraph 8 ii) - the cost associated with prevention works at a major fire risk site should have stated £0.035m rather than £0.35m.

With regard to Treasury Management, Members noted that the Authority was significantly “under-borrowed” to the extent of around £10m. This shortfall was funded by disinvesting the large cash balances held in relation to the ear-marked revenue reserves. 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 small £0.027m revenue overspend;***

***iii) Noted the projected expenditure on “Invest to Improve” projects; and***

***iv) Noted the implementation of changes to the Capital Budget approved by the Fire Authority.***

**0256 Property Update**

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

Members noted that previous reports to the 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 developed, with particular regard to the largest projects which were still to be tendered, notably Hereford Fire Station and the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility builds.

Members were pleased to note that the planning application for the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility had been approved last week and detailed design work was now progressing to enable final costs to be established for the proposed project.

The Chief Fire Officer thanked Members for their support in the capital

build programme ensuring that all wholetime stations were either new or refurbished which made an immense difference to staff moral and performance. It was further noted that on call stations would be looked at after 2025.

***RESOLVED that the property update and progress of the capital build programme and property maintenance be 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; and***

***vi) Planned and reactive property maintenance.***

**0257 2023-24 Performance Report: Q3 (01 October – 31 December 2023)**

The Assistant Chief Officer presented a summary of the Service's performance for Q3, 2023-24.

Members noted that a total of 2,076 incidents were attended in Q3 2023-24, an increase of 3% on Q3 2022-23. The Service also attended 16 'Over the Border' incidents during this quarter. 1,898 Home Fire Safety Visits were completed which exceeded the quarterly target of 1875 HFSVs per quarter and the number of inspections of business premises had decreased to 315 due to Protection staff realigning workloads in Q3 2022-23 to increase capacity in delivering other areas of Protection work in Q4 2022-23.

Following a discussion about false alarms, a Member requested further information on the total number of malicious false alarms attended. There was also discussion about flooding events, in particular rescues from fords, and a Member requested further information on the number of ford rescues attended. This information would be sent to all Members following the meeting.

***RESOLVED that the details of the Q3 2023-24 performance headlines be noted, in particular that:***

***i) A total of 2,076 incidents overall were attended in Q3 2023-24 which was an increase of 3% on Q3 2022-23;***

***ii) Fires (312) were 7% lower than Q3 2022-23 and lower than the***

**five-year average of 344;**

**iii) Special services (699) were 4% higher than the corresponding quarter of the previous year and higher than the five-year average of 627; and**

**iv) False alarms (1,065) were higher by 6% compared with Q3 2022-23 and above the five-year average of 872.**

The Meeting ended at: 12:00

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman