



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 14 November 2023, 10:30

Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Minutes

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

0243 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr J Monk and Cllr D Morehead.

0244 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

0245 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).

0246 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

0247 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Quarter 2

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 were informed that as part of the routine second quarter budget

review the Strategic Leadership Board identified small projected savings of £0.086m. There were also £0.184m of capital finance savings as a result of a pause in the programme pending the outcome of the resource review.

Members were advised that it was proposed to use £0.050m of the overall £0.270m to bring the saving to funding of the Breathing Apparatus project up to the final expected cost of £1.3m.

[Cllr Davies entered the meeting at 10.33am]

It was further proposed to use the remaining £0.220m to support the Hereford Fire Station replacement project and in particular the revenue costs of a temporary fire station whilst redevelopment of the site is undertaken.

Members were pleased to note that the April 2023 pay award for Green Book (support staff) had now been settled. Payments, which were as budgeted for, would be backdated to staff from 1 April 2023.

In relation to Treasury Management, Members noted that the Authority is significantly “under-borrowed” to the extent of around £10m. This shortfall is 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 will be used up and additional long-term borrowing will be required.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- i) Confirmed the revenue budget allocation adjustments;***
- ii) Noted the current projection of a £0.270m revenue underspending;***
- iii) Noted the projected expenditure on “Invest to Improve” projects;***
- iv) Approved the allocation of £0.050m of the revenue underspend to the Breathing Apparatus project;***
- v) Approved the allocation of the remaining £0.220m of the revenue underspend to the Hereford Fire station project; and***
- vi) Noted the implementation of approved changes to the Capital Budget.***

0248 Property Update

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Director of Protection and Assets

provided Members with an update on the current property programme.

Members had previously been informed of the inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector. Taking this into account the Treasurer is building in contingency funds in anticipation of the current capital build programme. Members will be updated as the projects develop, with particular regard to the largest projects, notably Redditch and Hereford Fire Station builds.

With regard to the Hereford fire station rebuild, Members were informed that only one suitable location had been identified for use as a temporary fire station during the rebuild. In order to ensure those premises were available when required, it would be necessary for the Authority to enter into a lease of the premises now, even though the overall costs of the scheme had not yet been finally approved. The temporary location would also require planning permission for change of use. There was therefore an element of risk involved by entering into a lease at this stage. Members were given details of the proposed lease and following discussion, Members agreed for Officers to proceed with the lease.

At the Policy and Resources Committee meeting in September it was reported that a full planning application for the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility had been submitted to Herefordshire Council on 20 December 2022, this had now been approved.

Members noted that a tender process via a construction procurement framework to identify a suitable contractor to build the training facility had closed and contractor interviews were progressing.

Although there was concern from Members in relation to the additional costs of contamination surveys for the disposal of the Kidderminster fire station site, Members were assured that investing money in surveys would strengthen the resale.

A Member queried the capacity for project management of the new builds. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that as well as our in-house Property and Estates Manager, project management was also undertaken by the office of the PCC on our behalf.

RESOLVED that:

1) The property update and progress of the capital build programme and property maintenance is 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.

2) Officers be authorised to enter into a lease of premises at Hereford for use as a temporary fire station in order to secure the location pending final approval of the new build scheme by the Authority.

0249 2023-24 Performance Report: Q2 (01 July – 30 September 2023)

The Assistant Chief Officer - Director of Prevention presented the Service's performance for Q2, 2023-24.

Members had been provided with an updated version of the report and appendix prior to the start of the meeting.

Members noted that a total of 2,063 incidents were attended in Q2 2023-24, a decrease of 17% on Q2 2022-23 and a decrease of 4% on the five-year average of 2,142 incidents. The Service also attended 17 'Over the Border' incidents during this quarter. 1,949 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 increased to 428.

Members were reminded that on 1 April 2023 the Service launched the new Attendance Performance Measure (APM). Q2 2023-24 is only the second time the Service has reported on this new measure, therefore there may be a need to adjust the way data is collected and analysed which would be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Members thanked officers for an excellent detailed report.

There was discussion regarding the recent flooding incidents and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that Hereford & Worcester were one of the best resourced Services for flood rescue capabilities. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that a report to a future Policy and Resources Committee meeting would be provided to Members about water rescue capability.

A Member sent their personal thanks to Worcester Fire Station who had

been called to the flats in St Johns recently.

RESOLVED that the details of the Q2 2023-24 performance headlines be noted, in particular that:

i) A total of 2,063 incidents overall were attended in Q2 2023-2024 which was a decrease of 17% on Q2 2022-2023;

ii) Fires (420) were 48% lower than Q2 2022/23 and lower than the five year average of 601;

iii) Special services (600) was 1% higher than the corresponding quarter of the previous year higher than the five year average; and

iv) False alarms (1,043) had decreased by 3% compared with Q2 2022/23 which was due mainly to a decrease in the number of good intent and malicious false alarms.

0250 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Director of Protection and Assets informed Members of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since the last update provided on 3 May 2023.

Members noted that the Joint Consultative Committee had met on 3 occasions since the previous update delivered to the Committee on 3 May 2023 (24 May 2023, 5 July 2023 and 27 September 2023).

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

i) Duty Systems - Day Crewing;

ii) Fitness and Attendance Management Policies;

iii) Promotion Processes;

iv) Industrial Action;

v) Core Code of Ethics Steering Group;

vi) Time in Motion Review;

vii) Cultural Audit Update;

viii) Property Update;

ix) Project Updates - New Fire Control System, On-Call, and Unwanted Fire Signals; and

x) Pensions Update.

The Meeting ended at: 11:44

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman