



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 19 December 2018, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr D Greenow, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Dr C A Hotham, Mr R I Matthews, Mr P Middlebrough, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Dr K Pollock, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr S D Williams

191 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr R Adams, Cllr P Agar, Cllr T Bowes, Cllr K Guthrie and Cllr I Hardiman.

192 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was a member of the Firefighters' Scheme Advisory Pensions Board and an employer member of the Fire NJC.

193 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed the Authority of the following:

- Attended the Worcestershire and Herefordshire Awards Ceremonies.
- Attended meetings recently with the Chief Fire Officer and staff.
- Attended the Service Exercise and the Dying to Drive.
- Work had commenced on the Wyre Forest Hub.
- Attended the Fire Conference in November.

Members were also reminded that the next meeting of the Authority was Monday 11 February 2019 at County Hall, Worcester.

194 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

195 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 30 May 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

196 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Interim Update

The Treasurer informed Members that the Authority had recently been notified of proposed changes to the employer contribution rates for Firefighter Pension Schemes which would have a significant impact on future budgets.

The Treasurer explained in detail what the proposed changes could mean to the Authority and that it was important that all Members were fully aware of the situation. He reiterated that the estimated annual cost to the Authority was £1.55m, but this could not be confirmed until individual scheme rates were announced.

The Treasurer also confirmed that information on the grant, business rate and tax-base had just been received. The provisional grant settlement was as expected and the increase in Council tax base was slightly better than predicted.

Members requested that Officers work with other Fire Services to lobby the government to fund the additional pension costs in full.

RESOLVED that the Authority notes the impact of the proposed increase in Firefighter Pension Scheme employer contributions.

197 Community Risk Management Plan Midpoint Review 2018

Members were presented with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Midpoint Review 2018 for consideration and approval.

Members were advised that the CRMP continues to provide the overall framework for managing risk, that the Midpoint Review highlights key events and changes over the last three years and outlines the process for preparing the next CRMP.

Members requested that Agenda Item 9 be combined with Agenda Item 8 to approve the proposal to extend the lifespan of the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-20 by one year.

A Member queried if amendments would be required to the CRMP following the outcome of the HMICFRS inspection. The Chief Fire Officer assured him that an Improvement Plan would cover any issues raised.

[Cllr Greenow left the meeting at 11:02].

Following concern by a Member, the Chief Fire Officer also assured Members that following the Grenfell Tower fire, Officers had visited high rise buildings in Worcester and Kidderminster and provided residents with fire prevention advice, Home Fire Safety Checks and ensured that common access areas were fully maintained.

[Cllr Eyre entered the meeting at 11:05].

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the CRMP Midpoint Review 2018 be approved for publication on the Service website; and**
- (2) the lifespan of the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-20 be extended by one year.**

198 Update on Implementation of Crewing Changes

In 2014, the Authority's agreed Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) confirmed the standard crewing on full-time appliances would be four but additional funding of £800,000 was released from reserves to provide crews of five on as many occasions as possible for a period of up to two years.

In February 2017, the Authority subsequently requested Officers to produce a plan to provide for crews of five on appliances across the Service on as many occasions as possible, at no additional cost to the Service and with no change to service provision.

Following detailed consultation, a new set of proposals was presented to the Representative Bodies (RBs) in August 2017, which dealt with the major issues that had been identified by them over the previous four months. Following further significant negotiations with the FBU, a 'Terms of Agreement' document was agreed in November 2017 and which was subsequently recommended to their members for approval by FBU officials. However, in February, the local FBU Brigade Committee voted to reject the proposed changes to contracts.

In response to that decision, the Fire Authority mandated Officers, if required, to use the dismissal/re-engagement process if suitable progress could not be made. However, in view of the broader national context, it had not been considered appropriate to pursue that course.

The Chairman commented that due to the local FBU membership not accepting a local agreement that would re-establish crews of 5, the Authority should formally accept standard crewing now as being 4, in line with its original CRMP 2014 decision.

During discussions the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that the current budget allowed for crews of 4. He also reminded Members that a number of Fire Services already rode crews of 4 and therefore this would not be a reduced service.

With regard to the Day Crewing Plus (DCP) system, Members were informed of recent Court decisions which meant that DCP was not compliant with the Working Time Regulations 1998 unless a local collective agreement could be negotiated with the Representative Bodies. Officers had started discussions with the FBU and FOA but at this stage the FBU had been unwilling to negotiate an agreement.

It was agreed that a further report be presented to the Authority at the February meeting.

RESOLVED that:

(1) Standard crewing on full-time appliances will remain at four, in line with the Fire Authority's original 2014 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) decision. This is due to the current inability to reach a local agreement with affected staff groups to implement the appropriate contractual changes which would have achieved crews of five, despite an agreement being negotiated with respective trade union representatives back in January 2018 (referred to in previous Authority papers as the 'Terms of Agreement' document).

(2) Officers enter into immediate discussions with the relevant representative bodies, with the view to reaching a local agreement in respect to the Day Crewing Plus (DCP) system.

(3) In respect to the DCP system, a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Fire Authority, if no local agreement has been

reached by that time, with a view to:

- i. implementing a suitable duty system for the second full-time fire appliances at Hereford and Worcester stations. The duty system would need to be economically viable in respect to the Service's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), as well as meeting the existing CRMP analysis from 2014 (which itself was subject to full public and staff consultation at the time); and
- ii. undertaking an immediate CRMP analysis in respect to Bromsgrove Station to determine a duty system that is the most suitable and economically viable to replace the current DCP system, whilst also taking into account the Service's MTFP.

(4) The Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer seek an urgent meeting with the Fire Minister in order to explain the impact upon services as a result of the difficulties in reaching agreements with the FBU.

199 Strategic Alliance Board Programme

Members were updated on the progress in delivering the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.

Members were asked to give approval for Officers to proceed with preparing option appraisals for the key priority projects.

RESOLVED that Members note progress to date and grant approval for Officers to prepare option appraisals.

200 Appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer

A report was presented to seek approval to make a permanent appointment to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) in place of the current temporary arrangements. This would be achieved by appointing a second substantive ACFO whilst the existing ACFO continues in the role of temporary DCFO.

[Cllr Middlebrough left the meeting at 11:50 and returned at 11:54].

RESOLVED that a second substantive post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer be appointed at the earliest opportunity.

201 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 25 July 2018.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 25 July 2018 be received and noted.

202 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meetings held on 12 September and 29 November.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meetings held on 12 September and 29 November be received and noted.

The Meeting ended at: 11:58

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman