

## **11. Report from Policy and Resources Committee**

### **Purpose of report**

1. To inform the Authority of the proceedings of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 5 September 2012.

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### **Recommendation**

***The Policy and Resources Committee recommend that the Authority note the proceedings of the Committee meeting held on 5 September 2012.***

### **Fire and Rescue National Framework for England**

2. The Committee considered a report which gave a briefing on the new Fire and Rescue National Framework for England which was published on 11 July 2012.
3. Members were advised that there were 3 priorities for Fire and Rescue Authorities namely:
  - to identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately;
  - work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service; and
  - be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
4. The four key areas within the Framework were the Integrated Risk Management Plan, Assurance, National Resilience and Accountability.
5. The National Framework document had remained largely unchanged since the consultation but there had been a few changes made to the text and some additional clarification but the Government remained constant on the use of the word 'must.'
6. There was some concern however about the extent of information required to ensure transparency to communities and Government as required through Annual Assurance Statements.
7. The Committee noted the content of the report.

### **Budget Monitoring Report**

8. Members considered a report that outlined the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2012/13.

9. The Treasurer presented the report and highlighted that since the FRA had approved the budget allocation in February 2012 an allocation amendment had been made to allow for the restructuring that had taken place of the Senior Management Team.
10. Members were advised that it was forecast that there would be an underspend of approximately £570,000 and that four areas had contributed to the underspend namely:
  - Wholetime uniform pay
  - Redundancy costs being charged to the 2011/12 budget
  - Further economies identified by budget holders
  - Offset by increased costs from the Retained Duty System (RDS) settlement
11. It was reported that movement within the Capital budget had been slow as there were contracts which were still subject to tender or acceptance.
12. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### **Fire and Rescue Authority Plan 2012/13 Quarter 1 Performance Analysis**

13. A report was considered that provided a summary of Quarter 1 performance against the Fire and Rescue Authority Plan 2012-13.
14. The following areas were highlighted:
  - Total incident numbers had decreased markedly (by 40%).
  - There had been a significant reduction in the number of fires.
  - With regard to attendance standards there had been a reduced performance but it was intended that this would be reviewed as part of the IRMP process.
  - With regard to Performance Indicator tolerance levels, indicators were within their 10% range except for the indicator regarding non-uniform sickness. Members were advised that the problem related to long term sickness but proactive measures were being taken to address this issue.
  - With regard to retained availability there had been a reduction of 2.7% of all retained pumps when compared with the same quarter last year. The Chief Fire Officer outlined some mitigating circumstances relating to the stations where the biggest drop in performance had occurred. It was noted that availability above 90% of retained pumps was considered to be good and this quarter availability had been 90.5%.
15. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### **Treasury Management Activities**

16. A report was considered that outlined treasury management activities for 2011/12.

17. The Treasurer presented the report. Members were advised that the banking arrangements and treasury management function was carried out by Worcestershire County Council under a Service Level Agreement (SLA). As part of the SLA arrangements a proportionate risk was taken depending on where the County Council invested the money. However, it was impossible for the County Council to invest the Authority's money in high risk environments as it was pooled to insure that the investments processes were as risk free as possible. It was noted that the average rate of return on investments was 0.26%.
18. Prudential indicators were set by the FRA as part of the overall budget and were within the limits of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
19. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### **Financial Prospects 2013/14**

20. A report was considered that provided the committee with an update on developments on the funding position for 2013/14 and beyond.
21. The Treasurer updated Members on developments since the Medium Term Financial Plan had been set.
22. There were five key areas of funding change which were being reviewed:
  - Base-lining of current expenditure and grant (for setting the future business rate retention arrangements).
  - The size of the fire 'grant' pot.
  - Business Rate Retention Scheme.
  - Localisation of Council Tax Support arrangements.
  - Council Tax policy and the implications of the 2012/13 freeze grant.
23. To date, although there had been a significant amount of new information it was considered to be indicative only and insufficiently detailed to be more accurate than the current Medium Term Financial Plan assumption.
24. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

#### **Employment Monitoring 2011/12**

25. A report was considered regarding employment monitoring for the year ended 31 March 2012.
26. The key trends were highlighted:
  - The staff in post, including ethnicity profile, numbers of female staff, number of support staff over 55 years of age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, gender reassignment and number of employees pregnant.

- Applications for employment and particularly the number of females applying to become retained firefighters.
- Applications for promotion – noting that there had been 76 more applications than last year.
- Leavers – noting that 68 employees left the service compared with 83 last year.
- Disciplinarys – noting that there were 8 formal disciplinarys this year compared with 3 last year.
- Grievances – noting that this year there were 9 compared with 5 last year.
- Bullying and Harassment Complaints – noting that there were 4 such complaints this year.

27. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Progress of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Implementation Plan**

28. A report was considered on the progress of the Retained Duty System (RDS) Implementation Plan.
29. It was noted that a three year action plan had been drawn up and that the objectives from year two were substantially complete or in progress.
30. Members considered a detailed appendix which outlined the work that had been undertaken during year two of the implementation plan. It was considered that the work that had been undertaken would improve the safety, competence and operational efficiency of the retained duty staff.
31. The Committee noted the report.

### **Wet Weather Conditions June/July 2012**

32. The Committee considered a briefing report on the effect of the wet weather conditions on the Service during the period 21 June 2012 to 20 July 2012.
33. As a result of the severe wet weather conditions business continuity measures were invoked to deal with the 1103 calls that were made in the period 21 June to 20 July 2012.
34. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **IRMP Recommendation 3 Fire Cover Review 2012-13**

35. The Committee considered a report that contained the proposed terms of reference for the IRMP Action Plan, Recommendation 3, Fire Cover Review 2012-13.
36. Members were reminded of the scope for the Recommendation 3 2012-13 Review namely:

- Locations
  - Crewing Systems
  - Appliance Numbers
  - Special Appliances
  - Review of Borders
  - Interoperability
37. It was anticipated that a report would be brought back to the Committee in six months' time
38. The Committee agreed the Terms of Reference for Recommendation 3 Fire Cover Review 2012-13.

### **Equality and Diversity Advisory Group Update**

39. A report was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the key areas of discussion at the Equality and Diversity Group meeting held in July 2012.
40. It was noted that the Chief Fire Officer now chaired this Group and that the Group's Terms of Reference had been changed. Furthermore it was noted that a representative from each Department of the Service was a member of the Group.
41. The following was highlighted:
- There was no longer a dedicated Equality and Diversity Officer within the Service and Human Resources provided the specialist Support.
  - The Equality Scheme would expire in March 2013.
  - An A5 booklet outlining the Service's Ethical Framework would be published shortly and training would be provided to Members following the May 2013 elections.
42. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **Joint Consultative Committee Update**

43. A report was considered that informed the Policy and Resources Committee of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since June 2012.
44. Members considered the key items that were still under discussion which included:
- Review of allowances
  - Use of Driver/Officer in Charge (OIC) on appliances
  - Part-time Workers' Settlement
  - Arrangements for Retained Duty Staff (RDS) working on Bank Holidays
45. The Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer who now chaired the Joint Consultative Committee was optimistic that these items would be resolved.

46. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### Health and Safety Liaison Panel Update

47. A report was considered that provided the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Liaison Panel.

48. The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### Financial Considerations

| Consideration   | Yes/No | Reference in Report<br>i.e. paragraph no. |
|---|--------|---|
| There are financial issues that require consideration | No     |   |

### Legal Considerations

| Consideration   | Yes/No | Reference in Report<br>i.e. paragraph no. |
|---|--------|---|
| There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration | No     |   |

### Additional Considerations

49. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

| Consideration  | Yes/No | Reference in Report<br>i.e. paragraph no. |
|--|--------|---|
| <b>Resources</b> (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).                        | No     |   |
| <b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact). | No     |   |
| <b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).       | No     |   |
| <b>Consultation with Representative Bodies</b>   | No     |   |

**Supporting Information**

None

**Background papers**

Agenda and papers Policy and Resources Committee meeting held 5 September 2012.

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