



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 16 September 2020,11:10

Chairman: Mr K Taylor
Vice-Chairman: Mr R Adams

Minutes

Members Present: Mr R C Adams, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mr A Fry, Ms K S Guthrie, Dr C A Hotham, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Mrs J Potter, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall

161 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Professor J W Raine.

162 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

163 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Fire Pension Scheme, member of the Fire NJC and Fire Commission and Chair of the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board.

164 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

165 Budget Monitoring 2020/21 – Quarter 1

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2020/21, and potential impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2024/25.

With regard to the revenue budget, the Treasurer explained the forecast variations against the revised budget and confirmed that there would be an in-year transfer to the Budget Reduction reserve of £1.405m.

With regard to the capital budget, the Treasurer explained that the proposed changes to the fleet strategy was due to the state of the fleet being significantly better than anticipated which meant that replacement of some assets was not as imminent as previously forecast and therefore there was delayed spending on the scheme.

The Treasurer finally informed Members that at the beginning of the financial year (2020/21) borrowing was at a level of £13.637m of which £1.500m was repayable in this year as planned. Members were also pleased to note that with the successful sale of the old Headquarters building of £5.5m and the slow down in capital expenditure, further borrowing may be deferred.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

(i) Notes that the forecast revenue out-turn would result in an in-year transfer to the Budget Reduction Reserve of £1.4m; and

(ii) Notes the potential variations to the MTFP.

166 2020-21 Performance Report: Quarter 1

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Members with a summary of the Service's performance for Quarter 1 2020-21 against a comprehensive set of Performance Indicators agreed by Senior Management Board (SMB).

Members' attention was drawn to a minor error at recommendation number ii) where the number of cases of self isolation was actually 43 and not 57 as noted.

Members queried the attendance standard and were assured that this was being looked at with the new CRMP proposals.

Members also queried the increase of false alarm incidents in Herefordshire which was thought to be due to the increase of gardening and burning garden rubbish during lockdown.

RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 relating to performance in Quarter 1, 2020-21:

i) A total of 1,791 incidents were attended in Q1 2020-21, a decrease of less than one percent (12 incidents) when compared

with Q1 2019-20. While the overall number of incidents for Quarter 1 2020-21 has remained similar to Quarter 1 2019-20, the distribution of incidents has changed. Fires and False Alarms incidents have increased whilst Special Services have decreased.

a. Fires: an overall increase of nearly 100 Fire incidents in Q1 2020-21 was mainly accounted for by an additional increase of over 50% in Secondary Fire incidents when compared to Q1 2019-20. The number of Primary Fire incidents remains comparable to Q1 2019-20 with only 1 additional incident. Although there was an increase in the overall number of Fires during Quarter 1 2020-21, there were no Primary Fire fatalities during this quarter.

b. Special Services: an overall decrease of 165 incidents in Q1 2020-21 was largely attributed to a 59.76% decrease in Road Traffic Collisions when compared to Q1 2019-20. The second largest decrease was in the collaborative incident types – ‘Assist other Agencies’ and ‘Effecting entry/exit’ - with 45 incidents fewer than the same period last year; however, it still accounted for a third of all Special Service incidents in Quarter 1.

c. False Alarms: although there was only a modest overall increase of around 7% in False Alarm incidents, the kind of False Alarms has changed when compared to Q1 2019-20. There was over a 40% increase in Good Intent False Alarms, a decrease of 25 False Alarms Due to Apparatus incidents and 6 less Malicious False Alarms incidents.

ii) Overall Staff Sickness level for Q1 2020-21 was 0.85 days lost per head (which is the ratio of the number of days/shifts lost per person against the average number of personnel) this shows an improvement when compared to Q1 2019-20, where the number of days lost per head was 3.03. In Q1 2020-21 Wholetime firefighter, Non-uniform and Fire Control staff sickness (days lost per head) were all lower than Q1 2019-20. Furthermore, there were 15 cases of Covid-19 sickness, where 8 cases were confirmed. A further 57 cases of self-isolation and one case of shielding across the service.

iii) The Service attended 57.05% (85 incidents) of Primary Building Fires within 10 minutes in Quarters 1 2020-21, compared with 48.95% (70 incidents) in Quarters 1 2019-20. The average time for the first fire appliance to attend a Primary Building Fire was 10 minutes 2 seconds for Q1 2020-21 compared with 10 minutes 41 seconds in Q1

2019-20; an average overall improvement of 39 seconds.

iv) The average for the overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance was 94.99%. The new Wyre Forest hub is not part of the calculations for overall availability figures as this would not give a fair comparison against 2019-20, when Wyre Forest was split across Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport fire stations.

167 HWFRS Response to the Covid 19 Pandemic 2020

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an overview of the Service's preparation, response and review of its business continuity arrangements during the Covid 19 pandemic, 2020.

Members congratulated the Service on their resilience in very difficult circumstances and the Chairman requested thanks be passed to staff.

RESOLVED that the content of this report be noted and that the Full Authority also receive a copy of this report at their next meeting.

168 Judicial Review - Update

The Head of Legal Services informed Members of the conclusion of the judicial review proceedings brought jointly by this Authority and Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority against the decision of the Home Secretary to approve a business case for the transfer of governance of the Fire & Rescue Service.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 8 of the report noting that the Government is currently undertaking a review of the role of Police & Crime Commissioners and the future of Fire Authorities which could have more of an impact.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

169 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item due to the likelihood that it discloses information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

170 Redditch Fire Station - Replacement

The Head of Legal Services presented Members with a scheme to replace the existing Redditch Fire Station with a joint Fire/Police Station on land at Middlehouse Lane, Redditch subject to reaching a satisfactory agreement with the other parties involved.

Members were pleased that a replacement fire station would be built in Redditch and approved the recommendation to progress.

[Cllr Potter left the meeting at 12.41pm]

RESOLVED that:

(i) the proposed scheme for the development of a joint Fire/Police Station at Middlehouse Lane, Redditch be approved;

(ii) a capital budget allocation of £5m for the Authority contribution to the joint scheme be agreed;

(iii) Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Chairman of this Committee, be authorised to enter into appropriate agreements on terms to be agreed with:

(a) Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council regarding the land acquisition, including a land swap for the unrequired part of the existing fire station site, conditional upon planning permission, remediation costs and development costs remaining within budget; and

(b) the PCC/West Mercia Police for the development and future ownership/occupation of the joint Fire/Police Station.

The Meeting ended at: 12:53

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman