



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Thursday, 16 September 2021, 10:30

**Chairman: Mr R J Phillips**

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

## **Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr D Chambers, Mr A Ditta, Mrs K Hey, Mr R J Phillips, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mr T Wells

### **179 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr K Guthrie, Cllr L Robinson and Cllr R Udall.

### **180 Named Substitutes**

There were no named substitutes.

### **181 Declarations of Interest (if any)**

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was a member of the NJC for Fire Service, Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), a member of the Fire Commission and a Director of Place Partnership Limited.

### **182 Confirmation of Minutes**

***RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.***

### **183 Budget Monitoring 2021/22 – Quarter 1**

The Treasurer updated Members on the current position of the revenue and capital budget for 2021/22.

Members were informed that since the Fire Authority meeting in June,

further clarity had emerged over the Retained Business Rate estimates which had resulted in a net reduction in the transfer to reserves of £0.121m. The Core Budget was now confirmed as £35.276m, funded by Precept, Grants and Retained Business Rates of £35.065m.

Members were also asked to note the Revenue overspend of £0.266m which related to pay awards and the potential for further capital financing under-spending due to a number of minor building schemes being delayed due to the wind down of Place Partnership Ltd.

***RESOLVED that:***

***(i) the revised Core Revenue Budget at £35.276m and the allocations in Appendix 1 Column 6 be approved;***

***(ii) the Revenue overspend of £0.266m relating to pay awards be noted; and***

***(iii) the potential for further capital financing under-spending be noted.***

**184 Exclusion of Press and Public**

***RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting relating to discussion of Appendix 1 of each of the Agenda Items 6 and 7 on the grounds that it would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, namely:***

***information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).***

**185 Redevelopment of Hereford Fire Station**

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the proposals for the redevelopment of Hereford Fire Station on the existing site in order to seek approval for an increased budget allocation.

Members were reminded that the Authority's Asset Management Plan 2009-2013, adopted in 2009 identified that the design of Hereford Fire Station was no longer fit for purpose, the building's services were approaching the end of their useful life and some elements of the building were deteriorating. In March 2011, the Policy and Resources Committee approved Hereford as one of four stations as priorities for replacement and allocated a budget at that time. Hereford Fire Station is the only scheme yet to be either completed or underway.

Although a number of proposals had been investigated over the years, including sites at Edgar Street Grid redevelopment, Bath Street, Merton Meadow, and more recently Holmer Road, none had been successful.

Members were informed that a high-level feasibility options appraisal of the existing fire station site at St. Owen Street had been prepared. A preferred option had been identified, proposing a new four bay fire station with associated accommodation, improving access and egress from the site and enhancing car parking.

Members were pleased to note the proposals and progress being made and approved the increased budget allocation for the build.

***RESOLVED that:***

***(i) the budget allocation for the redevelopment of Hereford Fire Station be increased to the amount shown in Appendix 1***  
**[CONFIDENTIAL - Not For Publication];**

***(ii) the Authority proceed with proposals for the redevelopment of the Fire Station on the existing site at St. Owen Street, Hereford; and***

***(iii) Officers be authorised to:***

***(a) appoint architects to complete detailed design work and seek planning permission for the proposed development;***

***(b) proceed with the proposed development subject to planning permission being granted and provided the estimated costs, including the costs of any temporary fire station, remain within the approved budget; and***

***(c) make suitable arrangements for the temporary location of the fire station during the construction period.***

**186 North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility & Feasibility to Relocate Leominster Fire Station, and Options to Move Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station**

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the proposals for the development of a North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility, the potential future relocation of Leominster Fire Station and options to relocate the Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station.

Leominster STF was the only 'hot fire house' training facility approved in 2011 which had not so far been delivered. However, a potential site had now been identified at Leominster Police Station, with a proposal to provide a two-storey training facility, with both domestic and commercial training scenarios and BA facilities.

A long term option to relocate Leominster Fire Station to the Police site has also been identified. The proposal was to further develop and incorporate the fire station redevelopment option into the STF planning permission documents, proposing a two phased approach to the scheme.

The existing Training Centre at Droitwich Fire Station was very constrained. It was therefore proposed to investigate the feasibility of relocating the Training Centre to the Wyre Forest Hub. These proposals would be subject to identifying appropriate funding and could be phased over a four year period.

The budget allocation for the North Herefordshire STF had been previously approved by the Fire Authority and Members agreed to proceed with the feasibility options and planning appraisal for the relocation of the Training Centre.

***RESOLVED that:***

***(i) the budget allocation for the development of the North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility (STF) be noted, shown in Appendix 1 [CONFIDENTIAL - Not For Publication];***

***(ii) the Authority proceed with proposals for the development of a North Herefordshire Strategic Training Facility on the Leominster Police Station site at Enterprise Park, Leominster (phase 1) subject to the agreement of the Police & Crime Commissioner;***

***(iii) Officers be authorised to:***

- 1. appoint architects to complete detailed design work and seek planning permission for the proposed STF development utilising the previously approved capital programme, shown in appendix 1;***
- 2. submit additional detail in the STF planning application as part of a proposed two phase development approach for the future relocation of Leominster Fire Station to the Police Station site;***

***(c) proceed with the proposed STF development subject to planning***

***permission being granted and provided the estimated costs remain within the approved budget;***

***(d) make suitable arrangements to enter into an agreement with the Police & Crime Commissioner to locate the STF at Enterprise Park (phase 1), and the potential future relocation of Leominster Fire Station if planning permission is approved and capital funding is identified (phase 2); and***

***(e) appoint architects to complete a feasibility options appraisal, including planning feasibility to relocate Training Centre to Wyre Forest Fire Station, financed from within the reserve approved in June 2021, also shown in Appendix 1.***

## **187 Property Update**

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the current property programme.

Members were informed that the Fire Authority had entered into an agreement for the OPCC to deliver the Service's property management functions as part of a joint property team. The new service became operational on 1st April 2021 and continues to transition and develop well.

It was noted that there were currently four new build schemes being planned/developed including; Broadway Fire Station, Redditch Fire Station, Hereford Fire Station, and a Strategic Training Facility in North Herefordshire.. Site disposal of the former fire station sites at Windsor Street Bromsgrove, Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport continued to be progressed.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

## **188 Pensions Board Update (Fire Pension Schemes)**

The Treasurer updated Members on the activities of the Pension Board for the Firefighter Pension Schemes (FPS). The aim of the Board was to assist the Scheme Manager in accordance with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013.

The Head of Legal Services explained to Members that "McCloud/Sargeant", which the the report referred to, was a legal case regarding the protections and transition arrangements for older members of the 2015 scheme. This was common across all public sector schemes,

however the scheme was found to be unlawful as it discriminated against younger members of the schemes. The Government intended to remedy this situation but the administrative consequences in doing so were significant.

**RESOLVED that the following areas of progress are noted:**

**(i) The Pensions Board continues to be compliant with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013.**

**(ii) Following the last report to the Policy and Resources Committee in May 2020, after advice from The Pensions Regulator, it was decided that the Pensions Board would move to four meetings per year. These were held on 22 October 2020, 18 January 2021, 14 April 2021 and 21 July 2021.**

#### **189 Firefighters Pension Schemes – Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP)**

The Treasurer presented Members with a variation to the current approval for the implementation of a Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP) to delegate authority to the Treasurer to agree appropriate arrangements.

Members agreed to delegate authority to the Treasurer to use the Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP) arrangement.

**RESOLVED that the Treasurer be given delegated authority to use the Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP) arrangement, in relation to the Firefighters Pension Schemes.**

#### **190 Quarterly Performance Reporting**

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with proposals to redesign the Performance Quarterly Report based on key performance areas identified in the new core and enabling Strategies.

The adoption of these key strategic performance indicators would ensure that:

- (i) The needs of the Fire Authority Members were met and that they had sufficient information and assurance on the Service's performance. Additional information and statistics could be provided upon request or by exception;
- (ii) The process of management against the performance indicators was efficient, appropriate and aligned to the HMIFRS data requirements; and
- (iii) The proposed new performance indicators were appropriate, relevant

and aligned to the Service mission and strategies.

***RESOLVED that:***

***(i) future quarterly performance reporting be aligned to the new Service core and enabling strategies and key performance indicators; and***

***(ii) the format of the report presented to Members be refreshed accordingly.***

**191 Q1 2021-22 Performance Report**

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with a summary of the Service's performance for Quarter 1 2021-22.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that they would receive a report at the next Fire Authority meeting detailing the Cause of Concern from the HMICFRS.

Members were pleased to note the Service's performance.

***RESOLVED that Members note the Q1 2021-22 performance headlines set out in the report, with further details available in the Appendix to the report.***

The Meeting ended at: 12:04

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman