



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 20 September 2017, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Mr R C Adams, Mr B A Baker, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr A Fry, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Mrs J Potter, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall

81 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Dr C A Hotham.

82 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

83 Declarations of Interest (if any)

In relation to agenda item 6 (Minute 84 - Treasury Management Activities 2016/17) Mrs E Eyre BEM declared she was a trustee of LAMIT.

In relation to agenda item 7 (Minute 85 - Firefighters Pension Schemes - Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP)) Mr R J Phillips declared he was a member of the Fire Scheme Advisory Board and also a member of the Fire NJC (employers).

84 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 22 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the PCC Business Case consultation results had just been released and updated Members accordingly.

2017/18 Budget Monitoring - 1st Quarter

Members were informed of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2016/17 and noted the forecast revenue underspend of £0.138m.

Members' attention was drawn to the uniform staff pay award offer. They were informed that the 2% offer had been rejected by the representative bodies and a further announcement was awaited following reconsideration. The Treasurer explained that should the 2% award be accepted this would offset the previously identified underspend.

With regard to the Capital budget, Members requested an update on Hereford and Redditch fire stations and the Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub. They were informed that Hereford is progressing well. There had been discussions with Herefordshire Council and the Police and construction was likely to be completed by 2020. For Redditch station, officers were awaiting confirmation that the Police would like to co-build. The site for the Wyre Forest Emergency Services Hub had been secured and it is hoped that the planning application would be submitted by Christmas this year and the build would commence at the beginning of 2018.

Members also queried the additional costs for the build of Evesham station and were assured that this was due to the ground contamination, however the overall costs were within budget.

RESOLVED that the Committee note:

- i) the forecast revenue underspend of £0.138m (-0.4%).
- ii) the budget risk regarding the pay award of £0.195m (+0.6%).

Treasury Management Activities 2016/17

Members were asked to review the Treasury Management Activities for 2016/17 and noted that the monitoring of the Prudential Indicators had demonstrated that the Authority had complied with its Treasury Management targets.

Members were pleased to note that there had been no additional borrowing requirement during the financial year and the balance that remained outstanding at the end of March 2017 was £12.637m.

RESOLVED that the Committee agree the Prudential Indicators were within the limits set by the Authority in February 2017 and that there

are no matters that require further attention.

87 Firefighters Pension Schemes – Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP)

Members were asked to approve the implementation of a Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP) arrangement in respect of Firefighters Pension Schemes.

Members queried if this was a National change and were informed that each Authority had discretion to approve the operation.

RESOLVED that the Committee approve the operation of a Voluntary Scheme Pays (VSP) in relation to the Firefighters Pension Schemes.

88 Sale of Garway Hill Radio Mast

Members were asked to approve the sale of the radio mast at Garway Hill, Herefordshire which is now surplus to the Authority's requirements.

Members were informed that although the Authority currently received a rental income for the site, the value of this is not guaranteed and there would be future maintenance liabilities if the mast is retained.

The Treasurer informed the Committee of the best offer received to date. Members agreed that it was in the Authority's best interests to dispose of the site and realise a capital receipt.

RESOLVED that the site at Garway Hill be sold on terms representing the best overall offer to the Authority as agreed by the Head of Legal Services and the Treasurer.

89 People Strategy 2017-2020

Members were presented with the People Strategy 2017-2020 and informed of the proposed implementation programme.

Members were advised that the Strategy represents a firm commitment to supporting and valuing our Service's workforce and that the Implementation Programme will be presented to the Audit and Standards Committee when available.

RESOLVED that the People Strategy 2017-2020 and the proposed action areas to be included in the People Strategy Implementation Programme be noted.

Members were provided with a summary of the Service's Quarter 1 performance against a comprehensive set of Performance Indicators agreed by the Senior Management Board (SMB).

There was particular discussion around retained availability, particularly Kidderminster, Bewdley and Droitwich stations. Members were advised that this was due to a number of personnel leaving the Service in 2017, however progress was being made to fill these positions. It was pleasing for Members to note that nationally the Service compares considerably well for availability.

There was also discussion around Community Risk issues and Members requested regular updates of the campaigns that are undertaken.

Members queried the reduction in attendance times. Officers confirmed that there was no national standard but the Service had set its own stretch target in 2012, which was currently being reviewed.

Members commented on the flooding incidents and were advised that the Service attends to domestic flooding incidents as an emergency but then passes to the appropriate utilities and authorities. Members were assured that flood prevention advice was given by the Service during Home Fire Safety Checks and during engagement with local businesses.

RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 relating to performance in Quarter 1, 2017-18:

i) A total of 1772 incidents were attended in Quarter 1, an increase of 5.6% (94 incidents) over the same period in 2016-17, and 7.9% (140 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years.

ii) The majority of the increase in Quarter 1 is accounted for by a rise in the numbers of Secondary Fire incidents, Special Service have stayed relatively constant while the number of False Alarm incidents are down:

a. Fires: an increase of 118 incidents for this period over the previous year is largely accounted for by an increase in Secondary outdoor Fires (up by 98 incidents) due to the warmer spring/early summer period.

b. Special Services: there was an increase of 2 incidents over the period. Most subcategories have actually reduced; these include

RTC's, Rescue/Evacuation from Water, Lift Release, Spills and Leaks (non-RTC) and Ring Removal. The areas in which increases have occurred are Flooding (4 incidents), Animal Assistance incidents (4 incidents), and Assisting other Agencies (15 incidents).

c. False Alarms: there was a decrease of 26 incidents overall when compared to the same period in 2016-17. Only a minor increase of the sub category of False Alarm Good Intent went up by 3 incidents.

iii) Overall Staff Sickness levels are 0.87 days lost per head, which remains within tolerance levels set (see paragraph 3 below) for Quarter 1.

v) The Service attended 60.6% (175 incidents) of Building Fires within 10 minutes in Q1 compared with 62.3% in the same period in 2016-17. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all building fires was ten minutes and eleven seconds.

vi) The overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 91.2%; this has decreased by 3.2% compared to the same period in 2016-17.

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Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

Members were informed of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since March 2017.

There was particular discussion around crewing systems and Members were advised that the Service was meeting with the Fire Brigades Union next week for further discussions. Members were advised that a further report to Members would be provided with the findings.

[Mr Fry left the room at 11.45am and re-entered the room at 11.48am]

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

- i) A review of crewing systems.**
- ii) Relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to Hindlip.**
- iii) Wyre Forest Hub.**

The Meeting ended at: 11:53

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman