



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 14 October 2020,10:30

Chairman: Mr R Phillips
Vice-Chairman: Mr P Tuthill

Minutes

Members Present: Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr M Hart, Dr C A Hotham, Mr R J Morris, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Dr K Pollock, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mr R M Udall

Also in attendance: Mrs Tracey Onslow, West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

270 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Amos, Cllr Fry and Cllr Toynbee.

271 Declarations of Interest (if any)

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

Cllr Oborski declared that she was a member of the Fire Commission.

Cllr Agar declared that she was a member of the LGPS Pensions Board.

Cllr Raine declared that he was a member of the Fire Commission.

272 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed Members of the following activity:

- The Authority is currently having an HMICFRS Inspection of its response to the Covid pandemic which is part of a national programme for all Fire and Rescue Authorities.

- The CFO and Chairman attended a virtual briefing on Grenfell with the Fire Minister.
- The Appointments Committee signed off the process and timetable for the selection of a new Chief Fire Officer. The recruitment plan included the advert, job description, criteria, salary and time scale. The advert went live at the beginning of the month and applications close on 30 October with interviews scheduled for 2 December, to be ratified by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 16 December.
- This year the Service will not be holding its annual presentation evenings, however the CFO and Chairman will be holding individual presentations at stations.
- Virtually attended meetings of the Fire Commission, NJC, Group leaders and several Fire Pension Scheme Board meetings submitting response to the McCloud/Sargeant rectification consultation.
- The CRMP consultation closure has confirmed that the feedback and the requests from it have been quite limited due to the fact that the plan was not as controversial as in previous years.

273 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

274 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 16 September be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at an appropriate time.

275 Presentation of Flooding Incidents

The Chief Fire Officer presented a PowerPoint presentation to Members on the flooding incidents between November 2018 and February 2020.

The Authority thanked staff both on the frontline and support for their exceptional work during difficult times.

276 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update

The Treasurer informed Members of the actual and potential changes to the

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2024/25, and then updated the Committee on changes that had taken place since the report was written:

- With regard to the McCloud/Sargeant Employer Contributions, the Home Office has now confirmed that there would be no backdated employers contribution to pay and cost would be spread across future years from 2022/23.
- With regard to the Council Tax Collection Fund, the Treasurer confirmed that the latest information from District Treasurers is that loss was around 2% and not 4% and they were expecting the tax base to stagnate as forecast

Members' attention was also drawn to the precept flexibility which would, if approved, allow an increase without going to referendum, and if the Authority chose to do so, that there would be surplus funds.

The Treasurer recommended that the Authority holds onto balances until further funding information is received.

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;

(ii) Notes the potential variations to the MTFP; and

(iii) Reconfirms the strategy to hold the Budget Reduction Reserve against future budget uncertainty.

277 Strategic Fire Alliance – priority projects update

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress in delivering priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.

Members thanked the Chief Fire Officer for a very good report and were pleased to note that the Service was making significant progress.

RESOLVED that Members note progress on projects to date.

278 HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Update Quarter 1, 2020-21

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress in implementing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. The report confirms that despite the significant impact of severe widespread flooding across the Service area earlier in the year, and the significant impact currently being

experienced due to the Covid – 19 pandemic, sound progress is being made to discharge the requirements of the Plan.

A question was raised regarding the timescale for completion of Safeguarding training by all staff. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that this would be looked into and a specific date would be applied to the system for completion.

A Member queried if staff appraisals were up to date. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured them that although some were paused during the pandemic, they were now continuing in line with the normal timeline of October and April.

RESOLVED that the Authority note progress on actions to deliver the HMICFRS Improvement Plan.

279 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 were assured that the Service is now well placed to transition into the new normality that society faces.

[Cllr Clayton left the meeting at 12.15pm]

[Tracey Onslow left the meeting at 12.15pm]

The Chairman requested that the Authority's appreciation for the recognition of the pressure and continued resilience be sent to all Staff following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

280 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 29 July 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 29 July be received and noted.

The Meeting ended at: 12:40

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman