



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 26 January 2022, 10:30

Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Minutes

Members Present: Mr D Chambers, Ms K S Guthrie, Mrs K Hey, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor

193 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr A Ditta, Cllr J Monk, Cllr R Udall and Cllr T Wells.

194 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

195 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.

196 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

197 Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on the budget for 2022/23 and implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Treasurer was pleased to report that the Comprehensive Spending

Review and Council Tax information had now been received and Members were provided with the updated data. Members were asked to approve the Council Tax Band D Precept increase. Following in depth discussions regarding the cost of inflation and the challenges being faced by our communities across the two Counties, and the need to avoid creating a future budget shortfall, Members agreed to recommend an increase in the Band D Precept of £1.72 per household/per year (1.96%).

Members noted the expenditure efficiencies expected to arise from the opening of the Wyre Forest Hub were being deferred by one year as a result of delays in the disposal of surplus buildings.

Members also noted that the Business Rates information was still awaited and it was anticipated to be received by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2022. This would be reported to the Fire Authority meeting in February 2022.

The Treasurer assured Members that the Authority's financial position in those areas where information was available was better than anticipated, but the as yet unknown Business Rates position could absorb all the gain.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

i) Approved the changes to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) expenditure projection;

ii) Recommended that the Authority increase the Band D Precept by £1.72 (1.96%);

iii) Noted that the MTFP funding projection awaited detailed information on Business Rates; and

iv) Noted that the indications were that the final MTFP would be within previously approved parameters.

198 Update on progress with the Invest to Improve programme

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress being made following the release of funding from strategic reserves in June 2021 to make long term improvements in some key elements of core service delivery and infrastructure.

Members noted the key areas of development and were pleased with the improvements being made.

RESOLVED that the schemes identified within the Invest to Improve programme and progress to date, be noted.

199 Fleet Strategy Update

The Assistant Director of Assets presented Members with an update on the current Fleet Strategy.

Members noted that the current Fleet Strategy was developed in 2015 to cover the period 2016 to 2021. A full review of the current Fleet Strategy was underway to ensure that it aligned with the new core strategies and would be published in 2022.

Members thanked Officers for the comprehensive report.

RESOLVED that the Fleet Strategy update be noted.

200 Property Services Update

The Assistant Director of Assets presented Members with an update on the current property programme.

Members noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner's property team now deliver the property management function as part of the joint property team, which became operational on 1 April 2021 and was continuing to transition and develop well.

There are currently four new build schemes being planned/developed across the two Counties and site disposals for former fire stations currently being progressed.

RESOLVED that the property update and progress is noted.

201 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since the last update provided on 2 December 2020.

Members were pleased to note the key issues under discussion.

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

i) Occupational Health provider

ii) HMICFRS Inspection and Cause of Concern

iii) Policies

iv) Job Evaluation

v) 12 Hour Day Duty System trial at Hereford Fire Station

vi) Standardising promotion processes

The Meeting ended at: 11:44

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman