



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 12 February 2020, 10:30

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

Minutes

Members Present: Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr S Bowen, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr A Fry, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mrs K Hey, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Dr K Pollock, Mrs J Potter, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee, Mr P A Tuthill

245 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Adams, Cllr Amos, Cllr Hart, Cllr R Morris, Cllr Raine, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Udall.

246 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was a member of the Fire NJC, Fire Pension Scheme Advisory Board, Chairman of the LGPS Scheme Board and a member of the Revenue Working Party for the Sargeant Pension Remedy.

The Chief Fire Officer declared that he was the National Fire Chiefs' Council Lead for Environment and Sustainability.

247 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed the Authority of the following:

- The Wyre Forest Hub would be operational from Monday 17 February 2020 and the opening ceremony would be scheduled for the end of May 2020.
- The Compact fire appliances would be rolled out to Worcester Fire Station and Bromyard Fire Station next week.

[Cllr Baker-Price, Cllr Clayton and Cllr Potter entered the meeting at 10.35am].

- The HMICFRS National Fire and Rescue Service report following Fire Authority inspections had been published and Members were advised it was available on the website for information.
- The HMICFRS Inspection date had been confirmed; week commencing 18 May for the discovery week and week commencing 8 June for the main inspection.
- Changes to crewing arrangements - the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that DCP was in the process of closing down and moving to the Day Duty system. He also confirmed that only 4 or 5 people did not get their first choice of location. With regard to Watch Managers, these positions were hoped to be undertaken on a 12 month temporary promotion to develop the individuals into the role. This was currently being finalised with Representative Bodies.
- Grenfell Inquiry - this was going through the second stage. The Chairman confirmed that there was no cladding issues on high rise properties in the two Counties.
- Attended the Herefordshire Awards Ceremony on Friday 7 February 2020 at the Town Hall in Hereford where the first Firefighter in the County was awarded the 40 years' Long Service.

248 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

249 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 18 December 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

250 Budget and Precept 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Treasurer presented a report recommending the Revenue and Capital Budgets and the Council Tax Requirement for 2020/21, the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (MRP) for 2020/21, the Capital, Investment and Reserves Strategies, the level of Fees and Charges for chargeable services for 2020/21 and potential future resources, their consequential impact on future year budgets and the future Council Tax Requirement (the Medium Term Financial Plan) for approval.

The Treasurer announced to Members that the Business Rate Yield and

the Grant Settlement data had not been received at the time the agenda was published but was pleased to inform Members that the figures had now been confirmed. The final Grant Settlement was issued on 4 February and is the same as the provisional data, however it will not be formally confirmed by parliament until week commencing 24 February. The Business Rate Yield was better than expected in the paper by £300,000. The Treasurer confirmed that any variation would be dealt with as a budget monitoring matter at the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

With regard to Precept, Members were opposed to a reduction in council tax and the Treasurer confirmed that the Medium Term Financial Plan would continue to assume further annual increases of 1.96% from 2021/22.

Members' attention was drawn to a typographical error in line 29 of Appendix 1.

A Member was interested in the Service's environmental issues and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he was the NFCC lead for Environmental and Sustainability. He confirmed that the Service was looking at LED lighting, insulation and electric vehicles and would bring forward proposals to utilise the additional £300,000 business rates to support sustainability.

Members thanked the Treasurer for a very comprehensive report.

RESOLVED that:

i) the Capital Budget and Programme (Appendix 1) be approved;

ii) the Revenue Budget (Appendix 4b) be approved;

iii) the Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix 5) be approved;

iv) the Core Net Revenue Budget of £35,827,000 be approved;

v) the Authority calculates that in relation to the year 2020/21 and set out in Appendix 7:

a) the aggregate expenditure it will incur will be £38,524,200.00;

b) the aggregate income it will receive will be £10,940,461.00;

c) the net amount transferred from financial reserves will be £3,022,000.00;

d) the net collection fund surplus is £255,825.00;

e) the net amount of its Council Tax Requirement will be £24,305,914.00;

f) the basic amount of Council Tax will be £85.99 (Band D);

g) the proportional tax-bands will be:

- Band A £57.33***
- Band B £66.88***
- Band C £76.44***
- Band D £85.99***
- Band E £105.10***
- Band F £124.21***
- Band G £143.32***
- Band H £171.98***

h) the precept demands on the individual Billing Authorities are:

- Bromsgrove £3,199,579.51***
- Herefordshire £5,998,302.92***
- Malvern Hills £2,699,856.17***
- Redditch £2,259,501.64***
- Worcester £2,772,540.47***
- Wychavon £4,457,221.59***
- Wyre Forest £2,918,911.70***

vi) the Capital Strategy (paragraphs 47-60) be approved;

vii) the Investment Strategy (paragraphs 78-83) be approved;

viii) the Reserves Strategy (paragraphs 64-70 and Appendices 8a/8b) be approved;

ix) the fees and charges for 2020/21 (Appendix 9) be approved; and

x) the Statement of Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (Appendix 10) be approved.

xi) approve the creation of a sustainability fund using the additional business rate yield.

251 Members Allowances Scheme 2020/21

The Chairman introduced the report asking Members to consider whether to make any alterations to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2020/21 in light of the change in the Consumer Price Index.

Following discussions, and in light of the current situation, Members

agreed not to increase the allowances for 2020/21.

RESOLVED that there be no change to the existing allowances for 2020/21.

252 Gender Pay Gap Report 2019

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the Gender Pay Gap report for the year ending March 2019.

Members were reminded that this was not an equal pay audit and that the report must be published on the website by 31st March 2020.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained to Members that as part of the Service's Positive Action approach, firefighter awareness sessions and mentoring opportunities were being offered for potential applicants from under-represented groups.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The gender pay gap figures be noted;**
- ii) Members noted the difference in calculation methodology used across the sector;**
- iii) Progress to bridge the gender pay gap is monitored via SMB;**
- iv) The Gender Pay Gap report (including a signed statement confirming the information is accurate) is published on the Service's website and Government's reporting website.**

253 Pay Policy Statement

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 for approval for publication on the Service's website.

Members were reminded that it is a requirement that the Authority's approach to pay is accessible for citizens and enables local tax payers to take an informed view of whether local decisions on all aspects of remuneration are fair and make best use of the public funds.

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement and supporting information be approved for publication.

254 Strategic Fire Alliance – priority projects update

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the progress on priority projects developed by the Strategic Fire Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.

The four priority projects agreed were Fire Control, IRMP/CRMP, ICT and Procurement. Further updates would be brought to future Fire Authority meetings.

RESOLVED that Members note progress on projects to date.

255 HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Update Quarter 3, 2019-20

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with progress in implementing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan.

Members were informed that this was the third update which showed that some good progress had been made during Quarter 3, 2019-20. Further progress updates would be reported each quarter.

Members were reminded that the plan was set out to be open and transparent and robust challenge from Members was welcomed.

Members commended officers for the production of the report.

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

256 Fire Authority and Committee Dates 2020/21

The Head of Legal Services presented Members with the meeting dates for 2020/21.

The Chairman confirmed to Members that there was still no update on the judicial review, however should the PCC take over the governance of the Fire Authority, a final Fire Authority meeting would be arranged.

RESOLVED that the meeting dates for 2020/21 be noted.

257 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

Councillor Pollock, a Member of the Audit and Standards Committee, presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 22 January 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

meeting held on 22 January 2020 be received and noted.

The Meeting ended at: 12:08

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman