



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 04 May 2022,10:30

Chairman: Mr R J Phillips

Vice-Chairman: Mr C B Taylor

Minutes

Members Present: Ms K S Guthrie, Mrs K Hey, Ms J Monk, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Phillips, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

203 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Chambers.

204 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

205 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr R Phillips declared that he was Vice Chair of the Firefighters Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales), Chair of the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (England and Wales) and a member of the NJC for Fire Service (Grey Book and Green Book).

206 Confirmation of Minutes

The Chief Fire Officer announced to Members that Deputy Chief Fire Officer Keith Chance would be retiring from the Service in August. In preparation, AC Ade Elliott had been temporarily promoted to ACFO and GC Samantha Pink had been temporarily promoted to Area Commander. Both were present at the meeting and were introduced to Members. Sam was welcomed as a new member of the Senior Leadership Board.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Budget Monitoring 2021/22 – Quarter 4

The Treasurer presented Members with a view of the out-turn position on the revenue and capital budget for 2021/22. It was explained that this was an interim view, in advance of the Provisional Financial Out-turn report to the Fire Authority in June.

The Treasurer highlighted three areas where the revenue budget had been adjusted to £35.275m:

1. Allocation of funds from Fire Control reserve;
2. Tax income guarantee grant; and
3. Funding budgets.

[Cllr L Robinson entered the meeting at 10.38am].

With regard to Treasury management, the Treasurer confirmed that there had been no additional borrowing due to the Authority currently holding significant earmarked revenue reserves and capital receipts from the sale of the old HQ building in 2020/21 and the recent disposal of surplus assets in Bromsgrove, Bewdley and Stourport.

[Cllr K Hey entered the meeting at 10.40am].

A Member queried the underspend on Prevention following the requirement to carry out inspections by the HMICFRS. The Chief Fire Officer explained that this was due to the Service already holding a significant stock of smoke alarms which haven't been able to be restocked due to Covid. Members were assured that this underspend was for the procurement of the smoke alarms only.

The Chairman suggested that narrative be included in the June Fire Authority report recommending the underspend be added to the budget.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- i) approves the revised core revenue budget at £35.276m;***
- ii) notes the net revenue and capital out-turn projections are still subject to change; and***
- iii) approves the principle that the additional rates grant is earmarked for the major building schemes.***

Pensions Board Update (Fire Pension Schemes)

ACFO Guy Palmer updated Members on the activities of the Pensions Board for the Firefighter Pension Schemes (FPS) to assist the Scheme

Manager in securing compliance with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013.

RESOLVED that the following areas of progress were noted:

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

ii) in line with the expectations of the Pensions Regulator, it was decided that the Pensions Board would move to four meetings per year.

209 Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021/2022

The Head of Legal Services presented Members with the draft Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021/2022 for adoption which sets out the steps that the Authority have taken to prevent modern slavery in its supply chains and own business. The Statement relates to the financial year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Members noted that this was very much the first statement produced, future statements would show development and progression in this area.

Members sought assurances regarding the reporting process if staff came across incidents of concern. The Chief Fire Officer explained that arrangements would be similar to current safeguarding arrangements and that staff had received extensive training in this area. He highlighted that eight of the Service's flexible duty officers were designated as national inter-agency liaison officers and have the necessary contacts to report any concerns.

Members were pleased with the work to date and looked forward to receiving further updates.

RESOLVED that the Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2021/2022 be approved and published on the Service website.

210 Young Firefighters Association

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the current position of the Young Firefighters Association (YFA) and proposed a review to alter the delivery model prior to recommencement following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.

Members noted that moving to UK Fire Cadets would enable the group to take advantage of a nationally structured programme that was evolving and improving with current topics and lessons.

Members approved the move from YFA to UK Fire Cadets and noted that it would commence operating in September 2022, which would align with the start of the new academic year and would also allow sufficient time to implement any changes identified in the gap analysis.

It was agreed by Members that a Member Champion should be elected for HWFRS's UK Fire Cadets, as has in previous years, and this would be proposed at the Fire Authority meeting in June.

RESOLVED that:

i) the existing Young Firefighters Association (YFA) be replaced by the NFCC endorsed format UK Fire Cadets, with a branch based at Droitwich Fire Station.

ii) a Member Champion be proposed at the Fire Authority meeting in June.

211 Property Services Update

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded for the duration of this item on the grounds that the information to be discussed would likely involve the disclosure of exempt information namely the business affairs of any person including the Authority.

ACFO Ade Elliott presented Members with an update on the current property programme.

Members 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. Planned and reactive property maintenance continues across the Service's estate. Site disposal of the former fire station sites at Windsor Street Bromsgrove, Bewdley and Stourport had been completed and Kidderminster continued to be progressed.

Members were assured that the Treasurer was building in contingency funds in anticipation of the current capital build programme due to the inflationary pressures being seen across the building sector. Members would be updated as projects developed, notably Redditch and Hereford fire station builds.

[Cllr D Morehead left the meeting at 11.34am].

RESOLVED that:

i) the property update and progress was noted, and

ii) the budget allocation for redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station be increased to the amount shown in Appendix 1 [CONFIDENTIAL - Not For Publication].

212 2021-22 Performance Report: Q3 (01 October – 31 December 2021)

ACFO Guy Palmer presented Members with a report summarising the Service's performance for Quarter 3, 2021-22.

Following Members' concern with on call availability, the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that there were only a handful of Services that had a high level of availability like HWFRS.

Members noted that the new attendance measure would outline all details for on call stations, including availability and number of incidents attended.

RESOLVED that the Q3 2021-22 performance report be noted.

213 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

ACFO Guy Palmer updated Members of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) since the last update provided on 26 January 2022.

Members noted the current issues under discussion with employee representatives.

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

- 1. The Mental Health at Work Commitment***
- 2. Hybrid Working Trial***
- 3. Day Crewed Duty System Review***
- 4. Policies***
- 5. Job Evaluation***
- 6. 12 Hour Day Duty System trial at Hereford Fire Station***
- 7. Review of Corporate Communications***

The Meeting ended at: 11:54

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

