



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 01 May 2019,10:30

Chairman: Cllr K Taylor

Vice-Chairman: Cllr R Adams

Minutes

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

143 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Clayton and Cllr Fry.

144 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes for this meeting.

145 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr Phillips declared that he was a member of the Scheme Advisory Board in relation to agenda item 7 (Minute 149).

146 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 29 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

147 Budget Monitoring 2018/19 – Quarter 4

The Treasurer informed Members of the latest position on budgets and expenditure for 2018/19 and provided an update on the 2019/20 budget.

Members were asked to note the small revenue underspend of £0.129m,

of which £0.075m was earmarked to fund additional pension costs in 2019/20.

The Treasurer was pleased to announce that the Authority had not borrowed any funds this year, however this may change for the following year.

The Treasurer confirmed that there was no specific budget for the Judicial Review costs but there would be sufficient in reserves to cover the cost which was agreed by the Authority.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the forecast revenue underspend of £0.129m (0.4%) and earmarks £0.075m of this to fund additional pension costs in 2019/20.

148 Place Partnership Limited - Shareholding

The Head of Legal Services requested Members to delegate authority to approve changes to the share structure of Place Partnership Ltd (PPL) as a result of Worcester City Council and Redditch Borough Council both having withdrawn from PPL.

Members expressed concern that the Fire Authority should review its own options in relation to PPL in view of the withdrawal of Worcester City and Redditch Borough Councils. It was noted that the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny panel were also due to undertake a review of PPL and that the Fire Authority could also take part in this.

It was agreed by Members that a report be presented to a future Committee meeting.

RESOLVED that:

(i) the Chief Fire Officer be given delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority to approve any changes to the share capital, repurchase or cancellation of shares in Place Partnership Ltd consequent upon the withdrawal of Worcester City and Redditch Borough Councils.

(ii) a review of the Fire Authority's involvement in PPL be brought back to this Committee at a future date and following completion of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny panel's own review.

149 Fire Pensions Board Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented Members with an update on the

establishment and activities of the Pensions Board.

Members were advised that although the Scheme Advisory Board suggests four meetings per year is best practice, the Pensions Board believes it should only meet when there is business to conduct and finds two meetings per year is sufficient at present.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he had attended one training session since taking the position of Chair and had two further training sessions scheduled in the future.

Members were pleased that the contract with West Yorkshire Pension Fund was progressing well.

RESOLVED that the Committee confirms that the Pensions Board continues to be compliant with the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

150 2018-19 Performance Report: Quarters 1-3

Members were provided with a summary of the Service's Quarters 1-3 performance against a comprehensive set of Performance Indicators agreed by the Senior Management Board.

A Member expressed her concern from her recent canvassing visits that residents had covered their smoke alarms. Members were advised to ask if residents would like a safe and well check from the Fire Service.

There was concern in relation to the increased number of incidents attended by the Service. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured Members that this was mainly due to greater partnership working and the more assisting of other services at incidents.

With regard to the monitoring of attendance times, Members were assured that this was being considered with a scientific approach.

In relation to on-call availability, Members requested comparable data. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to investigate neighbouring services and report back at a future meeting.

Members thanked the on-call staff for their excellent availability and service they provide to the communities. Members were assured that the Senior Management Board visit each station yearly to thank the staff personally.

RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 relating to performance in Quarters 1-3, 2018-19:

i) A total of 5,780 incidents were attended in Q1-Q3, an increase of 9.45% (499 incidents) over the same Quarters of 2017-18, and 11.30% (587 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years. The overall five year trend shows a gradual increase in the total number of incidents.

ii) The majority of the increase in Q1-Q3 is accounted for by a rise in the numbers of Fire and Special Service incidents, while the number of False Alarm incidents was also up but at a lower rate:

a. Fires: an increase of 15.91% was mainly accounted for by a rise in the number of Secondary Fires (24.00%).

b. Special Services: an increase of 14.10% (176 incidents) was mainly accounted for by increases in the number of Flooding (43), Assisting other agencies (27) and Other Special Services (85) incidents.

c. False Alarms: an increase of 3.26% (82 incidents), the most common automatic activations are at a number of sheltered housing, nursing homes and hospitals.

iii) Overall Staff Sickness level for Q3 2018-19 was 2.50 days lost per head and was slightly above the 5-year average of 1.99.

iv) The Service attended 54.67% (281 incidents) of Primary Building Fires within 10 minutes in Quarters 1-3, compared with 59.82% in the same period in 2017-18. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all Primary Building Fires was 10 minutes and 26 seconds.

v) The overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 85.21%; however, this has decreased by 3.14% when compared to the same period in 2017-18.

151 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) – Annual Review

The Head of Legal Services was pleased to announce that there had been no use of covert investigatory techniques during the past year.

Members were also informed that this may be the last report they receive

as the Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, with the agreement of the NFCC, were proposing to introduce amendments to legislation to remove Fire and Rescue Services from the list of authorised bodies for the purposes of RIPA, therefore taking away the need to report to Committee.

RESOLVED that the Committee note there has been no use of covert investigatory techniques during the past year.

152 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since September 2018.

Members were assured that in relation to the DCP, officers were still in consultation with representative bodies to continue with a wider agreement.

There was concern with the lack of exit interviews. Members were assured that there was a system in place, however employees choose not to undertake them.

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

- i) Change of Contracts**
- ii) Internal Staff and Pay Protection SPI (Service Policy Instruction)**
- iii) DCP**
- iv) Service Core Values**
- v) Night Time Cover**

The Meeting ended at: 11:55

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman