



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 12 September 2018, 14:00

## Minutes

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

### 124 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr J Potter.

### 125 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes for this meeting.

### 126 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

### 127 Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 28 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 128 2018/19 Budget Monitoring – 1st Quarter

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2018/19.

Members were asked to note the forecast revenue underspend of £0.820m and approve the earmarking of £0.750m towards the cost of replacing Broadway Fire Station.

During discussions on the capital budget in relation to Redditch Fire

Station, Members were informed that a suitable site had been identified for a replacement fire station and the project was progressing well. Members thanked the Head of Legal Services for his work in relation to Redditch fire station.

A Member raised a query with regard to the interest rate payable to the Public Works Loans Board. The Treasurer confirmed to Members that the borrowing interest rate was just over 3% on a fixed rate.

**RESOLVED that the Committee:**

- i) Note the forecast revenue underspend of £0.820m (-2.5%);**
- ii) Approve the earmarking of £0.750m (-2.3%) of this underspend towards the cost of replacing Broadway Fire Station; and**
- ii) Note the continuing budget risk regarding the pay award.**

## **129      2018-19 Performance Report: Quarter 1**

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

In response to a question from a Member regarding crewing proposals, the Chief Fire Officer agreed to bring an update report to the next Fire Authority meeting on 19 December 2018 and gave an assurance that no permanent changes to contracts outside of existing 'Grey Book' terms and conditions would be implemented in the meantime without the agreement of the relevant recognised bodies.

Concern was also expressed over future housing developments in the West of Worcester and the potential requirements on the Service for additional fire cover. The Chief Fire Officer indicated that the next CRMP in 2020 would take account of all new development in the area.

A Member questioned the response times for retained stations but was reassured that the delay was often due to road conditions rather than the distance required to travel.

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

- i) A total of 1,917 incidents were attended in Q1, an increase of 8.2% (145 incidents) over the same Quarter of 2017-18, and 11.5% (220 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years. However, the overall 5 year trend remains relatively consistent.**

ii) The majority of the increase in Q1 is accounted for by a rise in the numbers of Special Service and False Alarms related incidents, while the number of Fire incidents was down:

a. Special Services: an increase of 20.4% (80 incidents) is mainly accounted for by increases in the number of Road Traffic Collisions (44), Flooding (21) and Other Special Services (30

b. False Alarms: a substantial increase of 8.9% (69 incidents), most common automatic activations are at a number of sheltered housing, nursing homes and hospitals.

c. Fires: have decreased slightly by 0.7% (4 incidents) over the previous year.

iii) Overall Staff Sickness levels were 2.06 days lost per head and is above the 5-year average of 1.44.

iv) The Service attended 60.4% (119 incidents) of Building Fires within 10 minutes in Quarter 1, compared with 60.6% in the same period in 2017-18. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all building fires was 10 minutes and 32 seconds.

v) The overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 88.1%; however, this has decreased by 2.2% when compared to the same period in 2017-18.

vi) That a report on crewing proposals be made available for the next Full Fire Authority meeting in December 2018.

## **130      Creating a Strategic Alliance**

Members were presented with a plan to create a strategic alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services.

Members were informed that the creation of a formal Strategic Alliance and Governance framework was a major step towards collective resilience, capacity and sustainability to effectively meet on going financial challenges, while also seizing the opportunity to deliver key joint priorities over the next 3-5 years and provide additional value to our local communities.

Members expressed their disappointment in the PCC's response and requested that the Chairman of the Authority respond formally ensuring a

copy is made available to members of the public on the website.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that any savings from within the Alliance would be brought to the Fire Authority's attention.

Finally Members agreed that that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman should both represent the Authority on the Strategic Alliance Board.

[Councillor Baker-Price left the meeting at 3.00pm].

**RESOLVED that:**

**i) The plan to create a Strategic Alliance between Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services be approved.**

**ii) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman be nominated to represent the Authority on the Strategic Alliance Board to be set up to oversee the Strategic Alliance.**

#### **131 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee**

Members were informed of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) since March 2018.

Members were pleased to learn that the vetting process was near the end of completion for the relocation of staff to Hindlip.

[Councillor Udall left the meeting at 3.13pm].

Members were also pleased to note proposals to use body and vehicle cameras throughout the Service to protect staff. The dangers of one incident recently was highlighted to the public on social media from the video footage obtained.

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

**i) Changes to crewing systems**

**ii) Relocation to Hindlip**

**iii) Cultural Review**

#### **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Authority were asked to exclude members of the public and press from Agenda Item 9.

**It was RESOLVED to exclude the public and press on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of**

**exempt information within the meaning of section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, namely - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information subject to legal professional privilege.**

**132      Redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station**

Members were asked to approve the redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station and the allocation of funding for the project.

Members were reminded that the future of Broadway Fire Station was considered as part of the CRMP process in 2014, at which time it was decided that the station should be kept as part of the Service's emergency cover arrangements.

Members agreed that Broadway Fire Station was in very poor condition, its design was not fit for modern needs and was overdue for replacement or major upgrading.

Summary of Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee authorised officers to proceed with the redevelopment of Broadway Fire Station on the existing site.

The Meeting ended at: 15:34

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Thursday, 29 November 2018, 10:30

## Minutes

**Members Present:** Mr R C Adams, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Dr C A Hotham, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mrs J Potter, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill

### 134 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Eyre, Cllr Fry, Cllr Greenow, Cllr Phillips and Cllr Udall.

### 135 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes for this meeting.

### 136 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

### 137 Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 138 Budget Monitoring 2018/19 – Quarter 2

The Treasurer informed Members of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2018/19.

Members were asked to note the projected year end expenditure of £32.962m and the forecast revenue small overspend of £0.013m.

With regard to the revenue budget, Members' attention was drawn to the projected annual variations, in particular the retained pay and non-pay

budget underspends. Members were also assured that there were no issues with the Place Partnership charges that showed as an overspend in Appendix 1 but which reflected expenditure on capital schemes that could not yet be capitalised.

With reference to the capital budget, a Member raised two queries with regard to the vehicle programme:

a. Smaller replacement vehicles for rural areas - the Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service was working with the crews to determine exact requirements for each station and Members would be kept up to date once the tender process had commenced.

b. Command vehicle - the Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was working closely with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service to provide two smaller command vehicles but this was delayed due to the preferred Mercedes chassis being currently unavailable.

[Cllr Clayton entered the meeting at 10.41am].

A Member expressed his concern with the drop in retained availability. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that there was a strategy in the next financial budget to resolve this issue and a report would be presented to the Senior Management Board by the end of the year.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note:**

- i. the forecast revenue overspend of £0.013m; and**
- ii. the continuing budget risk regarding the pay award.**

**139**

### **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Interim Update**

The Treasurer informed Members that the Authority had recently been notified of proposed changes to the employer contribution rates for Firefighter Pension Schemes which would have a significant impact on future budgets.

The Treasurer explained in detail what the proposed changes could mean to the Authority and that it was important that all Members were fully aware of the situation. He reiterated that the estimated annual cost to the Authority was £1.550m, but this could not be confirmed until individual scheme rates were announced.

The Treasurer also confirmed that information on the grant, business rate

or tax-base would not be expected until January 2019.

A Member queried the figure in paragraph 26, third bullet point of 7.4% and the Treasurer confirmed that it was incorrect and should have read 8.4%. Members were assured that this figure would be corrected in the report.

A query was also raised with regard to the potential impact on the precept and why this was different for other Fire Authorities. It was confirmed that this was because some Fire Authorities derived a higher proportion of their income from government grant than others.

Members requested that this report be presented to the full Fire Authority at the December meeting and time be given for a full debate which was agreed by Officers. Any discussion of this Authority's potential approach towards future precept levels was deferred until then.

**RESOLVED that the Committee:**

- i. Note the significant potential impact of the proposed increase in Firefighter Pension Scheme employer contributions;**
- ii. Approve that the impact is included in future Budget/MTFP projections; and**
- iii. Recommend that the Fire Authority are fully briefed on the impact of the proposed increase in Firefighter Pension Scheme employer contributions.**

**140 Replacement of Hereford Fire Station**

Members were asked to approve the delivery of a replacement for Hereford Fire Station at an alternative location to that previously identified and for funding to allow for feasibility and detailed design of the project to be approved from the existing project budget allocation.

The Head of Legal Services clarified to Members at the start of the meeting that at the time of writing the report the Police and Crime Commissioner was negotiating the purchase of an alternative site and had hoped this would have been completed by the time of the meeting. These negotiations were still on-going.

He explained that the flood risk assessment undertaken for the Merton Meadow site highlighted the potential flooding of the area which would impact on operational response and therefore it was recommended that there was no further consideration for this site.

A Member questioned if Place Partnership Limited would be running the



project as he had concern over the length of time for the replacement of Redditch Fire Station. The Head of Legal Services assured Members that he had no concerns over the time the projects had taken and explained that an update report on Redditch Fire Station would be presented to the Committee in the New Year.

**RESOLVED that Officers be authorised to proceed with a redevelopment of Hereford Fire Station subject to the new site being secured by West Mercia Police, and that:**

**i. interest in the Herefordshire Council owned Merton Meadow site is withdrawn;**

**ii. funding for feasibility and detailed design for the project to the sum of £250,000 is approved; and**

**iii. subject to the cost to this Authority not exceeding the provision within the existing capital programme, the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Treasurer, Head of Legal Services and Chairman of the Authority be authorised to enter into an agreement with the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia (and/or others) to:**

**a. development a multi-agency facility including new Fire Station, on land at Holmer Road, Hereford;**

***b. the apportionment of all costs and fees; and***

**c. determining the future ownership structure.**

## **141 2018-19 Performance Report: Quarters 1-2**

Members were provided with a summary of the Service's Quarters 1 and 2 performance against a comprehensive set of Performance Indicators agreed by Senior Management Board.

Concern was expressed over the retained availability at Bewdley and Stourport Stations, although did note that availability had improved at Kidderminster Station. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that this was due to the Watch Commanders having the ability to book themselves onto on call appliances if available.

A Member requested that when comparing sickness the statistics include other Fire Services rather than Councils as this wasn't comparative jobs. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that Shropshire Fire and Rescue

Service would be included in future statistics.

There was concern over the recent press in the Redditch area with the Service helping patients home from hospital as Members had not been informed. The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Service Level Agreement was still being drawn up with the Acute Trust. He explained that the Community Risk team would assist by transporting patients home and then carrying out a Safe and Well Check to ensure their home was safe for their return.

An error was pointed out on page 52 of the agenda in table 14, the figure of 344 should have read 135. Officers assured Members that this would be corrected.

**RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 relating to performance in Quarters 1-2, 2018-19:**

**i. A total of 4,070 incidents were attended in Q1-Q2, an increase of 12.5% (453 incidents) over the same Quarters of 2017-18, and 14.5% (273 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years. However, the overall five year trend remains relatively consistent.**

**ii. The majority of the increase in Q1-Q2 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 19.4% was mainly accounted for by a rise in the number of Secondary Fires (27.9%).**

**b. Special Services: an increase of 17.9% (144 incidents) was mainly accounted for by increases in the number of Flooding (37), Other Special Services (79) and Assisting other agencies (15) incidents.**

**c. False Alarms: an increase of 5.5% (93 incidents), the most common automatic activations are at a number of sheltered housing, nursing homes and hospitals.**

**iii. Overall Staff Sickness levels for Q2 2018-19 were 1.70 days lost per head and was slightly above the 5-year average of 1.61.**

**iv. The Service attended 57.3% (219 incidents) of Building Fires within 10 minutes in Quarters 1-2, compared with 60.8% in the same**

period in 2017-18. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all building fires was 10 minutes and 31 seconds.

v. The overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 86.38%; however, this has decreased by 3.12% when compared to the same period in 2017-18.

**142 Use of Fire Stations to support Homeless People**

Members were updated on the potential use of fire stations to support homeless people during cold weather conditions.

Members were advised that after extensive research unfortunately the use of fire stations was not appropriate at this stage due to security and non trained staff. Members thanked Officers for their time in exploring the potential use.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

The Meeting ended at: 11:45

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman