



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Wednesday, 24 February 2021, 10:30

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

Minutes

Members Present: Mr R C Adams, Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr T D Baker-Price, Mr B Clayton, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr A Fry, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs K Hey, Dr C A Hotham, Mr R J Morris, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Dr K Pollock, Mrs J Potter, Professor J W Raine, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall

Also in attendance: Mrs Tracey Onslow, West Mercia Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

306 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Toynbee.

307 Declarations of Interest (if any)

Cllr 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 Worcestershire Local Government Pension Board and a member of the Fire Commission.

Cllr Oborski declared that she was a member of the Fire Commission.

Cllr Agar declared that she was a member of the Worcestershire Local Government Pension Board.

Cllr Raine declared that he was a member of the Task and Finish Group for Grenfell Fire and a member of the Fire Commission.

308 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman informed Members that this was the Chief Fire Officer's last meeting before his retirement and messages would be dealt with at

item 14 of the agenda. He also informed Members that the next round of HMICFRS inspections were due to take place in April.

The Chief Fire Officer was delighted to announce that Area Commander Guy Palmer was successful at interview for the vacant position of Assistant Chief Fire Officer and would take up the position upon his retirement and Jean Cole, Head of Corporate Services, was recently successful for the Assistant Chief Fire Officer post at Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service and would be leaving the Service at the end of April after the HMICFRS inspection. He congratulated them both and wished them good luck going forward.

Members were also updated on recent Covid activity which included working closely with Local Resilience Forum partners by continuing with face mask testing and supporting the acute trust with the movement of the deceased and supporting local authorities with PPE when necessary. The Service had also offered to assist vaccination teams, although at present this was not required as they had the appropriate number of volunteers, but may be called upon for resilience later in the year.

309 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

310 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at an appropriate time.

311 Budget and Precept 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Treasurer presented a report recommending the Revenue and Capital Budgets and the Council Tax Requirement for 2021/22, the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Statement (MRP) for 2021/22, the Capital, Investment and Reserves Strategies, the level of Fees and Charges for chargeable services for 2021/22 and potential future resources, their consequential impact on future year budgets and the future Council Tax Requirement (the Medium Term Financial Plan) for approval.

Members expressed their concerns with the pay award 'pause' proposed by the government for public sector workers as felt it didn't portray the right message following a difficult year with Covid and flooding. The Treasurer explained that this was a national award which, if one was

agreed, the Service would have to meet and would need to be included in a updated MTFP. The Treasurer confirmed that the figure shown for 2021/22 was for the full year effect of last year's pay award, as this was not clear in the report.

There was a query as to whether Brexit would affect the procurement strategy in the future. The Treasurer confirmed that the biggest procurement was commercial vehicles as most were manufactured in the EU, however based on information from the Home Office, additional inflation had been included in the budget to cover additional costs.

Members thanked the Treasurer for a very comprehensive report and confirmed they were pleased with the Service's good solid financial management and efficiency savings to move forward.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Capital Strategy (paragraphs 13-26) be approved;***
- ii) the Capital Budget and Programme (Appendix 1) be approved;***
- iii) the Core Net Revenue Budget of £35,056,000 (Appendix 4) be approved;***
- iv) the Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix 5) be approved;***
- v) the Authority calculates that in relation to the year 2021/22 and set out in Appendix 7:***
 - a) the aggregate expenditure it will incur will be £35,161,200.00;***
 - b) the aggregate income it will receive will be £10,811,794;***
 - c) the net amount transferred to financial reserves will be £131,000.00;***
 - d) the net collection fund deficit is £119,743.11;***
 - e) the net amount of its Council Tax Requirement will be £24,600,149.01;***
 - f) the basic amount of Council Tax will be £87.68 (Band D);***
 - g) the proportional tax-bands will be:***
 - Band A £58.45***
 - Band B £68.20***
 - Band C £77.94***

- **Band D** £87.68
- **Band E** £107.16
- **Band F** £126.65
- **Band G** £146.13
- **Band H** £175.36

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

- **Bromsgrove** £3,260,346.04
- **Herefordshire** £5,993,071.97
- **Malvern Hills** £2,741,798.95
- **Redditch** £2,293,424.78
- **Worcester** £2,816,300.76
- **Wychavon** £4,533,534.15
- **Wyre Forest** £2,961,675.36

vi) the Reserves Strategy (paragraphs 66-74 and Appendix 8) be approved;

vii) the Investment Strategy (paragraphs 75-80) be approved;

viii) the fees and charges for 2021/22 (Appendix 9) be approved; and

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

312 Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 – Proposed Amendments to Text following Consultation

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with proposed amendments to the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 (the CRMP) for approval for publication.

A Member felt that the reduction in fires over 10 years was not emphasised enough in the document as this was excellent news for the Fire Service.

A Member queried the number of RTCs on rural roads throughout Herefordshire and was pleased to note that the Service was working closely with the Police and Safer Roads Partnership to help reduce through prevention activities.

[Cllr Alan Amos left the meeting at 11:23am]

RESOLVED that Members approve the proposed amendments to the draft CRMP document and authorise the publication of the finalised

CRMP.

313 Environmental Sustainability Plan: 2021-2025

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the Environmental Sustainability Plan: 2021-25 for approval for publication on the Service's website.

Members were informed that this Strategy was not a cost saving exercise as some investment in years 1 and 2 would be required to facilitate future changes, however it represented a significant step forward for the Authority in meeting governmental and public expectation in reducing the impact the Service has on the environment.

Members queried why an end goal of zero carbon had not been included in the Strategy but were assured that before this was committed a greater understanding was required due to the reliance on diesel vehicles which would cause a challenge.

Following discussions, it was agreed that a Member Champion should be involved and the Chairman suggested this be nominated via the Group Leaders.

RESOLVED that:

i) Members approve the Environmental Sustainability Plan for 2021-25 for publication; and

ii) A Member Champion for Environmental Sustainability be nominated via Group Leaders.

314 Members' Allowances Scheme 2021/22

The Chairman presented Members with a report to consider whether to make any alterations to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2021/22 in light of the change in the Consumer Price Index to December 2020.

Following discussions it was agreed that no change be made to the existing allowances for 2021/22.

RESOLVED that there be no change to the existing allowances for 2021/22.

315 Pay Policy Statement

The Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the annual Pay Policy

Statement 2021/2022 for approval for publication.

Members noted the contents of the report and approved the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 for publication on the Authority's website.

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

316 HMICFRS Improvement Plan – Update January 2021

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the progress in implementing the HMICFRS Improvement Plan. The report confirmed that despite the significant impact currently being experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic and three national lockdowns, good progress was being made to discharge the requirements of the Plan.

Members were assured that the Service was in a good position for the impending inspection.

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

317 Fire Authority and Committee Dates

The Chairman presented Members with the meeting dates for 2021/22.

RESOLVED that the meeting dates for 2021/22 be noted.

318 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 20 January 2021 be received and noted.

319 Special announcement from the Chairman

The Chairman thanked all Members, in particular his Vice Chairman and Group Leaders for their support during this difficult and challenging year which has put the Authority in a very stable position to take forward.

[Cllr Alan Amos entered the meeting at 12.23pm].

The Chairman then spoke about the Chief Fire Officer who was retiring at the end of March as this was his last meeting. He commented that the Authority is now in a better place and has a clear road map for the future. He then called on Group Leaders and the Committee Chairs to speak.

The Chief Fire Officer then thanked everyone for their kind words and assured Members that the past 5 years had been a great end to his career.

Members then thanked Cllr Phillips for being a superb Chairman.

The Meeting ended at: 12:36

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman