



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 21 September 2016, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Mr R C Adams, Mr B A Baker, Mr A Fry, Ms R E Jenkins, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr R J Phillips, Mr D W Prodger MBE, Mr C B Taylor, Mr J W R Thomas, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall

Substitutes: none

Absent: none

Apologies for Absence: Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr J L V Kenyon

58 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 21 March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

59 2016/17 Budget Monitoring - 1st Quarter

Members were informed of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2016/17 and noted the forecast revenue underspend of £0.656m.

RESOLVED that the forecast revenue underspend of £0.656m (2.1%) be noted.

60 Revision to Medium Term Financial Plan

Members were informed of the efficiencies made by the Authority and asked to consider amendments to the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority be recommended to approve amendments to the Medium Term Financial Plan, resulting in a revised budget gap of £1.657m by 2019/20.

61 Treasury Management Activities 2015/16

Members were asked to review the Treasury Management Activities for 2015/16 and noted that the monitoring of the Prudential Indicators had demonstrated that the Authority had complied with its Treasury Management targets.

RESOLVED that the Committee agree the Prudential Indicators were within the limits set by the Authority in February 2016 and that there are no matters that require further attention.

62 Quarterly Performance Report Q1

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.

There was particular discussion around various aspects relating to false alarm calls and was noted that the number of malicious fire calls was extremely low.

In relation to retained availability, Members requested that future reports include information about the number of calls each station has attended.

[Councillor Adams entered the meeting at 10.58am].

RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 of the report relating to performance in Quarter 1, 2016-17:

i) a total of 1,678 incidents were attended in Q1, an increase of 7.3% (114 incidents) over the same Quarter of 2015-16, and 4.0% (67 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years. However, the overall 5 year trend remained relatively consistent;

ii) the majority of the increase in Q1 is accounted for by a rise in the numbers of Special Service and False Alarm incidents, while the

number of Fire incidents was down:

a. Special Services: an increase of 19.9% (65 incidents) is mainly accounted for by increases in the number of animal assistance (13 incidents), flooding (11) Road Traffic Collisions (9) and water rescues (6).

b. False Alarms: an increase of 11.2% (81 incidents) is mainly because of automatic activations at a number of sheltered housing, nursing homes and hospitals and 13 incidents following the installation of a new alarm system at a block of flats in Kidderminster;

c. Fires: a decrease of 6.2% (32 incidents) over the previous year is largely accounted for by a fall in the number of Secondary Fires (down by 46 incidents) with fewer outdoor fires in a wetter than usual late spring/early summer period;

iii) the number of Fires and Special Service incidents continues to show a five-year downward trend, and False Alarms show a slight upward trend. While the figures are relatively consistent over the last five years, trends will continue to be analysed and monitored;

iv) overall Staff Sickness levels are 1.31 days lost per head, which remains within tolerance levels for Quarter 1 and below the five-year average of 1.63 days;

v) the Service attended 60.9% of Building Fires within 10 minutes in Q1 compared with 62.3% in the same period in 2015-16. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all building fires remained below 10 minutes (09:48); and

vi) the overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 94.4%, a slight decrease of 0.5% in Q1 compared to the same period in 2015-16.

Members were asked to approve the revised Fleet Strategy 2016-2021. Members noted that the Fleet Strategy would be reviewed annually and the Committee would receive further updates at the January meeting

each year, aligned to the budget setting processes.

Councillor Phillips, as Chairman of the Task and Finish Group that considered fleet issues earlier in the year, noted that the strategy was in accordance with the Task and Finish Group's findings.

RESOLVED that the new Fleet Strategy 2016-2021 be approved.

64 Evesham Fire Station Update

Members were advised of unforeseen additional work required to deliver the new Evesham fire station due to there being more contaminated material to deal with and an increased cost of doing so. Members noted the total cost of the project to the Fire Authority was now estimated at approximately £694,000 but that this still compared favourably to the alternative cost of works that would otherwise have been necessary to the existing fire station.

RESOLVED that:

i) the additional costs of this scheme be noted and the budget allocation be adjusted accordingly; and

ii) that a further report be presented to the Committee when the final costs are known.

65 Proposed New Hereford Fire Station ('One Herefordshire Hub')

Members were updated on developments in relation to the proposed new fire station in Hereford and proposals for a joint use building with Police and Herefordshire Council, to be known as the 'One Herefordshire Hub'. Members expressed their concerns over the delay in a new fire station and the consequential need to undertake remedial work on the existing fire station.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the development of a multi-agency facility, to include a new Fire Station, on land at Edgar Street, Hereford in conjunction with the Police & Crime Commissioner for West Mercia and Herefordshire Council (and/or others) be approved, subject to:

(i) the cost to this Authority not exceeding the provision within the existing capital programme; and
(ii) the estimated running costs being no more expensive than a stand-alone fire station;

(2) officers be authorised to incur all necessary expenditure to progress the above development up to tender stage, on such terms as may be agreed by the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Treasurer, Head of Legal Services and Chairman of the Authority; and

(3) a further report be brought to this Committee for approval once discussions have taken place with regard to:

(i) the apportionment of all costs and fees between the relevant partners;
(ii) the future ownership structure; and
(iii) land swap of the existing Hereford Fire Station site (if appropriate)

(4) Remedial work to be undertaken on the existing fire station should the need arise.

66 Proposed Hereford Slipway - Feasibility

This item was included in the agenda following a request from Councillor Kenyon at the previous Fire Authority meeting in June.

Members were provided with context to determine the need to proceed with a feasibility study to explore the potential of an additional slipway in Hereford to launch water rescue boats. Following discussion, Members agreed that costs would not be viable unless the work was being undertaken in partnership with others, at a shared cost and as a joint facility.

RESOLVED that officers be authorised to contribute towards the costs of a feasibility study into the provision of a slipway at Hereford if satisfied that there are sufficient other interested parties willing to contribute for such a scheme to be potentially viable.

67 Employment Monitoring Data 2015-16

Members noted the progress against the Public Sector Equality Duty, prior to the publication of the Employment Monitoring Data 2015-16 on the Service website. Members remarked that the document was excellent, providing data in a very clear manner.

RESOLVED that the following areas be noted:

- i) Progress has been made in increasing the diversity profile of Retained Duty System (RDS) staff with an increase in representation from female and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) RDS groups;**
- ii) Targeted recruitment campaigns to increase the representation of local communities within the workforce are ongoing;**
- iii) There has been progress in reducing formal disciplinary, harassment and bullying case work, and it should be noted that this has coincided with the Training Centre reporting an increased number of staff who have completed Equality and Diversity training.**

68 Update from the Health and Safety Committee

Members were provided with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

RESOLVED that the following activities and items of significance from Quarter 4 2015-16 be noted:

- i) a total of 29 Health and Safety events were reported, a decrease in comparison to the previous quarter where 38 events were reported;**
- ii) the Health & Safety Committee is exploring a number of opportunities to share best practice and to collaboratively develop health and safety policies and procedures with other fire and rescue services; and**
- iii) the Health & Safety department is undertaking a review of the health and safety management systems with regards to the Service's fleet.**

69 Update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

Members were provided with an update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group.

RESOLVED that the following areas be noted:

i) Positive progress against the Service's current equality objectives was reported to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group Meeting on 27 June 2016;

ii) There is a proposed realignment of equality and diversity replacing the Advisory Group with an Organisational Development Board led by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer in order to better support embedding equality and diversity across the Service;

iii) Excellent progress has been made in equality and diversity training, and there are plans to introduce an e-learning package;

iv) A Service representative attended the recent Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Annual General Meeting and Development Day on 26 and 27 May 2016;

v) Service representatives attended the MIND Blue Light Regional Conference;

vi) A Service representative attended the Women in the Fire Service UK Annual Conference.

70 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

Members were informed of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee. It was noted in the meeting that there was an error in paragraph 6 (fourth bullet) which should have read that there will be full consultation with Representative Bodies and their members with regard to electronic payslips.

RESOLVED that the following items currently under discussion by

the Joint Consultative Committee be noted:

- (i) A review of the Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations SPI**
- (ii) Relocation of Service Headquarters (SHQ) to Hindlip**
- (iii) Wyre Forest Hub**
- (iv) Job Evaluation**
- (v) Introduction of electronic payslips**

The Meeting ended at: 11:49

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman