



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Full Authority

Tuesday, 15 February 2022, 10:30

**Chairman: Mr C B Taylor**

**Vice-Chairman: Mr R J Phillips**

## **Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr A Amos, Mr S Bowen, Mr B Brookes, Mr D Chambers, Mr A Ditta, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mrs K Hey, Mrs E Marshall, Ms N McVey, Mr D Morehead, Mr R J Morris, Ms L Robinson, Mr L Stark, Mr C B Taylor, Mrs D Toynbee, Mr R M Udall, Mr T Wells

### **346 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr B Clayton, Cllr E Eyre, Cllr R Phillips, Cllr J Monk and Cllr D Boatright.

### **347 Declarations of Interest (if any)**

There were no interests declared.

### **348 Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman, along with all Members of the Authority, extended their deepest and sincere sympathy to family, colleagues and friends of Matthew Lee, an on-call firefighter from Wyre Forest, who had been tragically killed earlier in the week.

The Chairman reminded Members of the Service Exercise being held on Saturday 26 February 2022, details of which had been sent to them via email and were urged to attend if they were able.

### **349 Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

### **350 Confirmation of Minutes**

***RESOLVED that the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 12***

***December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.***

*[Cllr Morehead entered the meeting at 10.37am].*

**351 Budget and Precept 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

The Treasurer presented Members with the Budget and Precept 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Members were asked to note the supplementary report and appendices that had been shared following late receipt of the data in relation to Business Rates and final confirmation of the final grant settlement.

Members were asked to determine the Revenue and Capital Budgets and the Council Tax Requirement for 2022/23, approve the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2022/23, approve the Capital, Investment and Reserves Strategies, approve the level of Fees & Charges for chargeable services for 2022/23 and identify potential future resources, their consequential impact on future year budgets and the future Council Tax Requirement (the Medium Term Financial Plan).

Members were pleased to note that the settlement and Comprehensive Spending Review were relatively favourable to the Service, having resulted in the Service being just under £1m better off than anticipated in the MTFP.

Members were also pleased to note that following previous concerns about the impact of construction industry inflation on the Major Buildings Programme, the two small budget surpluses in 2022/23 and 2023/24 would be held against the potential future costs.

Members requested the Policy and Resources Committee consider options for the use of any potential future resources and the Head of Legal Services undertook to draw this to the attention of the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor R Phillips.

***RESOLVED that:***

- i) the Capital Strategy (paragraphs 13-27) be approved;***
- ii) the Capital Budget and Programme (Appendix 1) be approved;***
- iii) the Core Net Revenue Budget of £36,853,000 (Appendix 11) be approved;***

- iv) the Medium Term Financial Plan (Appendix 13) be approved;**
- v) the Authority calculates that under the provisions of the relevant sections of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), and, in relation to the year 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 15:**
- a) the aggregate expenditure it will incur [S42A(2)(a)] will be £36,928,800.00;**
- b) the aggregate income it will receive [S42A(3)(a)] will be £11,266,646.00;**
- c) the amount transferred to financial reserves [S42A(2)(c)] will be £208,432.00;**
- d) the amount transferred from financial reserves [S42A(3)(b)] will be £49,000.00;**
- e) the net collection fund surplus [S42A(10)] is £253,207.70;**
- f) the net amount of its Council Tax Requirement [S42A(4)] will be £25,568,078.30;**
- g) the basic amount of Council Tax [S42B] will be £89.40 (Band D);**
- h) the proportional tax-bands [S47] will be:**
- Band A £59.60**
  - Band B £69.53**
  - Band C £79.47**
  - Band D £89.40**
  - Band E £109.27**
  - Band F £129.13**
  - Band G £149.00**
  - Band H £178.80**
- i) the precept demands on the individual Billing Authorities [S48] are:**
- Bromsgrove £3,353,491.52**
  - Herefordshire £6,280,582.13**
  - Malvern Hills £2,871,451.56**
  - Redditch £2,373,271.31**
  - Worcester £2,908,024.25**
  - Wychavon £4,721,986.20**
  - Wyre Forest £3,059,271.33**
- vi) the Reserves Strategy (paragraphs 69-77 and Appendix 16) be**

***approved;***

***vii) the Investment Strategy (paragraphs 78-83) be approved;***

***viii) the fees and charges for 2022/23 (Appendix 9) be approved; and***

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

**352 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Report and Improvement Plan**

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the outcome of the 2021 HMICFRS inspection report and the preparation of an improvement plan.

Members were informed that the inspection had been carried out completely remotely which may explain the lack of context in the report. There were 22 areas of improvement identified in the report. Officers were preparing a draft Improvement Plan, to be presented to a future meeting and which would then be regularly updated and published as progress was made. Proposals would be assessed to ensure they met the Service's overall Core Purpose and aligned to the core strategies.

Members queried why they had not been interviewed by the inspectors as they had done previously. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the only Member involved was the Chairman, HMICFRS were very specific as to who they interviewed as they were not looking at governance. Members were assured that HMICFRS were complimentary about the level of detail the Service provides to Members.

Members noted that the previous Cause of Concern was being reported on separately via the Audit and Standards Committee.

***RESOLVED that Members noted the findings of the HMICFRS inspection report and the proposed improvement plan.***

**353 Attendance Performance Measure**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented Members with a report to seek permission to undertake public consultation on a new Service Attendance Performance Measure as outlined in the 2021-25 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Members were reminded that this was a public consultation only on the performance measure and not on any changes to fire cover or the speed at which the Service would respond to incidents.

Members noted that a revised attendance performance measure would provide local communities with a much clearer picture of the emergency incident response time for the area in which they live for each type of incident attended.

It was proposed that the response time would be measured from the time of mobilisation to the arrival at the scene by the first appliance. Call handling time would not be included as part of this measure. Attendance performance would be reported against expected travel times by using a new mobilising system, which was being progressed currently. Route network analysis would be used in order to determine the risk areas of 10, 15 and 20 minutes response time using each fire station's location as a starting point.

Members noted that in adopting this model would support the strategic alliance with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and ensured a more transparent consistent approach across both Services. A company would be appointed to carry out the consultation on the Service's behalf, at a cost of approximately £15,000, which had already been budgeted for.

Members requested sight of the consultation document before the process commenced. It was agreed that this would be shared with Group Leaders for consideration.

***RESOLVED that the consultation document be provided to Group Leaders for consideration prior to the commencement of the public consultation on a revised Attendance Performance Measure.***

#### **354 Replacement Mobilising System Reserve Budget**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented Members with a report to seek the authorisation to begin spend against the Fire Control Reserve to procure a replacement mobilising system for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS).

*[Cllr Hart left the meeting at 11.32, returned at 11.34am].*

Members noted that it had been agreed to provide a proven and tested system rather than one in development or untested in a UK Fire Service. It was anticipated that an 'off the shelf' command and control system could be live in HWFRS control room by the end of 2023, if procurement was initiated in February 2022. At the latest it was anticipated that the product would be fully live by the end of 2024.

***RESOLVED that Officers be authorised to utilise the agreed Fire Control reserve to procure a replacement command and control***

***system for the Service.***

**355 Pay Policy Statement 2022-2023**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the Pay Policy Statement for 2022-2023 for approval and publication on the Authority's website.

Members noted that the Localism Act required the Authority to adopt, prior to the commencement of each financial year, a Pay Policy Statement to operate for the forthcoming financial year. The Statement set out, amongst other items, the Authority's policy towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce and in particular the senior staff and the lowest paid employees.

***RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022-2023 be approved and published on the Authority's website.***

**356 Members' Allowances Scheme 2022/23**

The Head of Legal Services presented Members with a report to propose an increase in the allowances paid to Members for 2022/23 and that future increases be linked to the National Joint Council annual pay award (if any) for 'Green Book' staff.

It was noted that Members' allowances had previously been nominally linked to the annual increase in CPI but in practice, against a backdrop of austerity and public sector pay restraint, Members had declined to make any changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme for several years. It was proposed that linking future increases to the annual pay awards for the Authority's non-operational, NJC 'Green Book' staff would be a more appropriate benchmark than the CPI.

The Head of Legal Services informed Members that the proposed increase of 1.75% for 2022/23 would equate to an additional cost overall of £900, which would be funded from within existing budgets.

***RESOLVED that:***

***(i) the existing basic and special responsibility allowances paid to Members be increased by 1.75% for 2022/23; and***

***(ii) in subsequent years, allowances be increased by the same percentage as the preceding year's pay award for National Joint Council 'Green Book' staff.***

**357 Fire Authority and Committee Dates 2022/23**

The Head of Legal Services presented Members with the Fire Authority and Committee dates for 2022/23.

Members were asked to note the revised date of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting in October 2022 since publication.

***RESOLVED that the meeting dates for 2022/23 be agreed.***

**358 Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 19 January 2022.

***RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 19 January 2022 be received and noted.***

**359 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee**

The Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee presented the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 26 January 2022.

***RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 26 January 2022 be received and noted.***

The Meeting ended at: 11:49

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman