



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Monday, 21 March 2016, 10:30

Minutes

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

Substitutes: Professor J W Raine (for Mrs F M Oborski MBE)

Absent: none

Apologies for Absence: Mr D W Prodger MBE, Mrs F M Oborski MBE, Mr J L V Kenyon, Mrs E Eyre

45 Declarations of Interest (if any)

No Member declared an interest.

46 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 27 January 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 2015/16 Budget Monitoring – 3rd Quarter

Members were informed of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2015/16.

Members noted the predicted underspend of £1.048m arising from budget constraints being exercised throughout the Service.

The Treasurer advised that of the current capital budget of £11.159m, only £2.305m expenditure had been spent, with a further £0.729m committed by way of orders. This, however, did not include the Redditch or Hereford Fire Station schemes included in the budget and £1.003m

remains as unallocated minor schemes.

With regard to treasury management, at 31 December 2015 short term investment via Worcestershire County Council comprised of £12.400m.

RESOLVED that the forecast revenue underspend of £1.048m be noted.

48 Proposed Co-Location of Police and Fire Service Assets

Members authorised Officers to progress to completion arrangements within the capital programme (minor works) for the joint location of Police and Fire Service assets at selected retained fire station locations.

Members were advised that closer working with West Mercia Police and other partners are continually being sought to deliver more efficient and improved ways of working.

Members asked about the timing of the works and were informed that it should be completed during the next 12 months. A more detailed timing schedule would be reported to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that Officers be authorised to progress arrangements with West Mercia and Warwickshire Police and the Fire Authority to share facilities at Bromyard Fire Station, Peterchurch Fire Station and Tenbury Wells Fire Station on terms to be agreed with the Treasurer and Head of Legal Services, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.

49 Proposed New Hereford Fire Station

Members were advised that the Police were no longer in a position to proceed with a new joint fire and police station in Edgar Street, Hereford and authorised Officers to proceed with the development of a proposal for a fire station only, on the same site.

RESOLVED that:

i) Officers be authorised to enter into negotiations with Herefordshire Council to provide a new fire station, in Hereford, at the existing proposed site on Edgar Street;

ii) Officers be authorised to spend a revised further allocated budget of up to £25k, as necessary, to take this new proposal forward;

iii) a further paper, including a detailed cost feasibility be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee for final approval before submitting planning applications and entering into a contract for the acquisition of the site and any disposal of existing land; and

iv) at an appropriate time Officers withdraw the existing outline planning application currently submitted for the joint police and fire station.

50 Houses of Multiple Occupation

Following the decision at the full Authority meeting on 17 February (Minute No. 72) when it was resolved that the Policy and Resources Committee consider allocating a further £60,000 from reserves to improve community safety campaigns in areas of social deprivation, particularly with regards to Houses of Multiple Occupation, Members were presented with a proposal to target additional resources in identifying fire safety issues in unlicensed HMOs and residential use above commercial premises, exposing non-compliant landlords, where vulnerability of tenants may be considerably higher.

Members were advised that a report would be presented back to the Committee in 12 months' time following the completed project.

RESOLVED that £60,000 funding be utilised to enable a 12 month project to be completed, targeting fire safety within Houses of Multiple Occupation type premises.

51 2015-16 Performance Report: Quarters 1 to 3

Members were provided with a summary of the Service's Quarter 1 to 3 performance against the Fire Authority Annual Report 2015-16 using the set of Performance Indicators agreed by the Senior Management Board.

[Councillor Jenkins left the room at 11.16am and re-entered at 11.21am].

RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines taken from Appendix 1 relating to performance in Quarters 1 to 3, 2015-16:

i) A total of 4,961 incidents were attended in Q1-3, an overall increase of 5.6% (263 incidents) in comparison to the same three Quarters of 2014-15. Despite this, the overall incident trend over the

last 4 years indicates that incident numbers have remained at a consistent level;

ii) The majority of the increase over Q1-3 is accounted for by rises in the numbers of Fires and Special Service incidents:

a. Fires: an increase of 11.4% (152 incidents) is largely related to a peak in grassland, woodland and crop fires during the drier summer months of May to August 2015;

b. Special Services: an increase of 9.9% (100 incidents) can be largely accounted for by an increase in the numbers of road traffic collisions (RTCs) and weather-related incidents in the wake of Storm Barney, which impacted on the two counties in mid-November 2015;

iii) Incident numbers in each of the three main categories – Fires, Special Services and False Alarms – have remained consistent over the last 3-4 years; and

iv) Overall Staff Sickness levels have remained within tolerance levels for Quarters 1 to 3.

52 Community Risk Activity Reporting

[Councillor Phillips left the room at 11.25am].

Members were presented with a proposal to incorporate Community Risk activity data within the quarterly performance reports to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members were advised that the data will bring together operational response, prevention and protection data into a single document and will provide a snapshot of how well the Service is delivering its aim of keeping communities and firefighters safe.

RESOLVED that Members endorse the proposal to incorporate Community Risk activity data within the Quarterly Performance Report from Quarter 1, 2016-17.

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

Members were asked to review the Authority's policy on the authorisation of covert surveillance techniques under the Regulation of Investigatory

Powers Act 2000.

Members were informed that the Authority had not relied on covert investigatory powers during the year.

Members were also advised that the Surveillance Inspector visited the Service on 2 March 2016 and confirmed that he was satisfied with the policies and procedures in place. It would nonetheless be helpful to include guidelines about the use of social media.

This would likely be the last such inspection the Authority receives as the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner is looking to adopt a risk based approach to inspections in future via a written questionnaire.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Committee note there has been no use of covert investigatory techniques during the past year; and**
- ii) the Head of Legal Services be authorised to make a minor amendment to the existing policy, to include reference to the use of social media, subject to the usual staff consultation.**

54 Pensions Board Update

Members were updated on the establishment and activities of the Pensions Board and advised that further updates will be provided to the Committee on a yearly basis.

RESOLVED tht the following areas of progress be noted:

- i) The pensions board has been established and is compliant with the Public Services Pensions Act 2013;**
- ii) There have been two meetings of the pensions board;**
- iii) Pension board members have attended two training sessions; and**
- iv) The pensions board has agreed terms of reference and administration systems.**

55 Update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

Members were provided with an update from the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group and were informed that the Service continues to make good progress in embedding its Equality and Diversity agenda and will continue to provide updates to the Committee.

Members were also informed that the Assistant Chief Fire Officer would now be chairing the future groups.

RESOLVED that the following areas of progress be noted:

- i) Service representatives attended the recent Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) National Conference on 26 and 27 November 2015;**
- ii) Progress against the Service's equality objectives will be reported to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group meeting on 23 March 2016; and**
- iii) The Service has subscribed to Quiltbag.**

56 Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

Members were informed of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee since September 2015.

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

- i) Policy on financial assistance for medical treatment;**
- ii) Project Arrow Update;**
- iii) Relocation of Service Headquarters to Hindlip;**
- iv) Logging of Pre-Arranged Overtime;**
- v) Wyre Forest Hub;**
- vi) Union Recognition and consultation;**
- vii) Job Evaluation; and**

viii) Use of Agency Staff

57 Update from the Health and Safety Committee

Members were updated on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

i) Health and Safety performance for Quarter 3 of year 2015-16 (October to December 2015); and

ii) The involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives at national level.

At the end of the meeting the Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer for his work to the Authority and wished him well for the future. Members were also asked to make a note of the Service Exercise taking place on Saturday 1 October 2016 at the Fire Service College.

Members also sent best wishes to Councillor Prodger MBE and wished him a full recovery.

The Meeting ended at: 11:48

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman