



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 22 November 2017, 10:30

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, Mrs J Potter, Mr C B Taylor, Mr P A Tuthill

92 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr R Phillips and Mr B Baker.

93 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

94 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

95 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 20 September 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

96 PCC Business Case

In the absence of the Chairman of the Fire Authority, the Vice-Chairman Mr P Tuthill provided Members with a verbal update on the PCC's Business Case.

Members were reminded that the PCC had submitted a revised business case direct to the Home Office and this was now being reviewed by CIPFA. Following a meeting with the Chairman of Shropshire & Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, the Leaders of the Constituent Authorities had

again requested the two Fire Authorities to engage the consultants to review the revised business case due to concerns about the potential impact this could have on the delivery of fire and rescue services and that the evidence then be fed into CIPFA for further consideration.

The Treasurer confirmed that the cost could be met from underspends elsewhere in the existing budget.

RESOLVED that the Authority contribute up to £10,000, shared between the two authorities, to support the cost of the consultants' review for the revised business case.

97 2017/18 Budget Monitoring – 2nd Quarter

Members were informed of the current position on budgets and expenditure for 2017/18 and noted the forecast revenue underspend of £0.278m and the in budget risk regarding the uniform staff pay award of £0.195m.

There was particular discussion around property issues; namely Redditch Fire Station and Wyre Forest Hub and Members were pleased to note that both projects were progressing as expected.

With regard to the Capital budget, Members requested a breakdown of each future project. The Treasurer confirmed that this would be provided to Members separately following the meeting.

With regard to Treasury Management, Members queried the borrowing and investment percentage rates and were happy with the information provided by the Treasurer.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (i) note the forecast revenue underspend of £0.278m (-0.9%); and**
- (ii) note the in budget risk regarding the uniform staff pay award £0.195m (+0.6%).**

98 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update

Members were informed of the current Medium Term Financial Plan and noted that a further report will be brought to the Committee when the key funding information has been made available.

Members asked if there were any further grants available from government and were advised by the Treasurer that all that was available

was what they had already received for the Headquarters move and the Wyre Forest Hub.

RESOLVED that the current resources position be noted and a further report be brought to the Committee when the key funding information has been made available.

99 Review of Cost Recovery for Chargeable Special Services – 2017/18

Members were asked to consider an increase in the cost recovery based charges made for certain operational non-emergency special services, in line with the rising costs incurred by the Authority.

Members queried how often these services were used and were advised that the number of lift rescues, in particular, had dropped as companies were now taking on better maintenance. Members were also reminded that the charging is not for attendance at an emergency, but charges could be made for any subsequent recovery phase, such as any clean up requested by the Environmental Agency.

Members noted that the level of charges had to be based on cost recovery and could not include a profit element. Members also noted that the fees would be reviewed in February 2018 for 2018/19 and annually thereafter.

RESOLVED that:

i) the fees for chargeable operational non-emergency special services be revised as set out in Appendix 1 of the report with immediate effect;

ii) in future this item be considered annually as part of the Annual Budget and Precept report to the Fire Authority.

100 2017-18 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 the Senior Management Board.

There was particular discussion in relation to retained availability at Kidderminster Fire Station. Members were advised that this was due to an unprecedented number of leavers, however, recruitment was currently underway. Members were assured that the Service's resources were being appropriately distributed during this time.

With regard to parking problems for fire engine access, Members requested to help the Service by issuing campaign leaflets. It was agreed that Members would receive the leaflet for their use once it had been finalised.

Members queried the data regarding attendance times at building fires and it was agreed that the figures needed to be adjusted as there were some inaccuracies.

RESOLVED that Members note the following headlines drawn from Appendix 1 of the report relating to performance in Quarter 1 & 2, 2017-18:

i) A total of 3617 incidents were attended in Quarters 1 & 2, an increase of 0.3% (11 incidents) over the same period in 2016-17, and 4.4% (159 incidents) higher than the average for the last five years.

ii) The majority of the increase in Quarters 1 & 2 can be accounted for by a rise in the numbers of Secondary Fire incidents (primarily with a spike in Q1, in isolation Q2 is lower than the same period of 2016-17). Special Service incidents have increased slightly, whilst False Alarms were down (72 incidents):

a. Fires: an increase of 59 incidents for this period over the previous year is largely accounted for by an increase in Secondary outdoor Fires (up by 54 incidents) due to the warmer summer period.

b. Special Services: there was an increase of 24 incidents over the period. Most subcategories have increased slightly; these include Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), assisting other Agencies, Rescue/Evacuation from Water, Spills and Leaks (non-RTC) and Ring Removal. The areas in which decreases have occurred are lift releases (9 incidents).

c. False Alarms: there was a decrease of 72 incidents overall when compared to the same period in 2016-17. Only a minor increase of the sub-category of Malicious False Alarms went up (7 incidents).

iii) Overall Staff Sickness levels are 2.90 days lost per head, which is outside of tolerance levels set (see paragraph 3 below) for Quarter 1 & 2.

iv) The Service attended 60.8% (344 incidents) of Building Fires within 10 minutes in Quarters 1 & 2 compared with 62.5% in the same period in 2016-17. The average time for the first fire appliance attendance at all building fires was nine minutes and forty two

seconds.

v) The overall availability of the first On-Call (Retained) fire appliance remains high at 89.5%; however this has decreased by 1.6 % when compared to the same period in 2016-17.

The Meeting ended at: 11:57

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman