



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 21 November 2014

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Conference Room, Oakroyd Hall, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Councillor B Smith (in the Chair): J Dodds (as substitute for Councillor T Austin), R Grahame, P Harrand, L Holmes, A Hussain, H Middleton, C Pillai, M Shaw (for agenda items 6 – E9 only, Min nos. 18 – 21 refer), A Stubley (as substitute for Councillor G Thornton) and A Wallis

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Councillors T Austin and G Thornton

13 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 12 September 2014 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14 Urgent item

None.

15 Admission of the public

RESOLVED

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items of business specified below as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of the descriptions specified;

AGENDA ITEM NO	TITLE OF REPORT	MINUTE NUMBER	Description of exempt information by reference to the paragraph number(s) in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972
E8	Purchase of Wildfire Vehicles	20	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs
E9	Multi-purpose Training Centre – refurbishment	21	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs

16 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest made in any matter under discussion at the meeting.

17 Treasury Management Monitoring – mid-year review 2014 - 15

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented a mid-year review of the Treasury Management Activity of the Authority covering the period 1 April to 31 October 2014.

It was reported that the treasury management activity during that period had been undertaken in compliance with the approved strategy, the CIPFA Code of Practice and the relevant legislative provisions. No changes to the strategy were proposed for the remainder of the year.

The Authority's current position with regard to banking arrangements was confirmed and it was reported that Barclays would be the new banker with a transfer expected in June / July 2015. Members were advised that there would be a cost in the new banking arrangement due to the fact that the Fire Authority would be handled as a separate account holder rather than the current "add on" to Kirklees Metropolitan Council arrangements. The charges were likely to be announced early in 2015.

Members were further advised that recent new banking legislation had removed protection to local authorities as borrowers. The impact of the legislative changes would be reviewed when the new Treasury Management strategy was considered for the 2015 – 16 financial year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

18 Quarterly Financial Review

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which presented an overview of the financial performance of the Authority in the eight months of the current 2014 – 15 financial year.

The report projected an underspend in the revenue budget of £1.2m, the largest element of which was the savings in salary (due to the industrial action and the increased number of retirements) of £1.688m. In response to a Member's question, it was explained that the retirement profile would be part of the medium term financial forecast.

The report identified that , to date, the Authority had incurred additional costs of £0.8m covering the periods of industrial action. This would be funded by the Fire Authority as no monies would be forthcoming from central Government in spite of representations having previously been made by the Chair of the Authority on behalf of West Yorkshire taxpayers.

The report provided an update on the 2014 – 15 capital plan and it was anticipated that further significant progress would be made before the end of the current financial year, funding for which would be from capital grant rather than through borrowing. The new Control Project had been included in the current capital plan and it was reported that the first phase (Control Room) had successfully gone live the previous week. The project had continued to operate well within budget and it was reported that the second phase (appliance based) would start operating within the next few days.

Members sought confirmation about progress on the sale of land at South Elmsall and Hemsworth following the construction of a new station at South Kirby. Updates were also provided regarding the Marsden station and former site and the former Gipton station.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the revised revenue budget be approved;
- c) That the revised capital plan be approved; and
- d) That future quarterly review reports include detail of, and reason for, the movement within the various elements of the capital plan between Committee meetings.

19 Purchase of Software Licences

Members received a report of the Director of Service Support which sought approval for the release of £220,000 from the capital budget for the renewal of annual software licences.

In response to a Member query it was reported that the licences for the SAP system were audited on an annual basis and, similarly, Microsoft licences were managed and monitored throughout the year as a matter of good practice.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the release of £220,000 from the capital budget for the renewal of annual software licences.

20 Purchase of Wildfire vehicles

(This item was considered as exempt information under Schedule 12A (3) of the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to financial or business affairs)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which sought approval for the purchase of three replacement Land Rover Defenders to support the Authority's wildfire capability.

It was reported that the current lease hire arrangements were no longer the most cost effective and the vehicles would be sourced as a capital purchase.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the purchase of three Land Rover Defender vehicles in accordance with the capital scheme detailed in the report now submitted.

21 Multi-Purpose Training Centre – refurbishment

(This item was considered as exempt information under Schedule 12A (3) of the Local Government Act 1972 – information relating to financial or business affairs)

The Director of Support Services submitted a report which sought approval for expenditure as detailed in the report now submitted for the refurbishment and improvements to the Multi-Purpose Training Centre and adjacent crane.

Members were advised that the refurbishment would increase the training capacity of the Breathing Apparatus and high level rescue facilities and significantly increase the range of training scenarios that could be accommodated.

RESOLVED

That expenditure in the sum detailed in the report now submitted be approved for the refurbishment and improvements to the Multi-Purpose Training Centre including the adjacent crane.

Chair