



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 12 September 2014

Time: 10.30 am

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

Present: Councillor B Smith (in the Chair); T Austin, R Grahame, L Holmes, A Hussain, H Middleton, M Shaw (for agenda items 6 – 12 only, Min nos. 6 – 12 refer), A Stubley (as substitute for Councillor G Thornton) and A Wallis

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Councillors P Harrand and G Thornton

1 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 28 March 2014 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 Urgent item – Update on Industrial Action

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that no further formal information had been received about progress with the discussions and no notice had been given to date of any further date(s) of industrial action. The FBU had, however, had constructive dialogue with Government's negotiating team on 11 September.

3 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.
E11	Holmfirth Mast Site Purchase	11	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs
E12	Banking Tender – outcome of negotiations (verbal report)	12	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs

4 Declarations of interest

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

5 Emergency Service Mobile Communications Project – update

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Strategic Development which advised of progress made with the national Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.

It was reported that little information had been made available by the Home Office to date with regard to the anticipated costs or savings that had been anticipated with the implementation of the replacement system for Airwave. Members were also advised that this Brigade needed to be reassured that the new project would be compatible with the new control system at the proposed cutover date in 2018.

Preferred suppliers had been invited to submit tenders for the project in early August and Government were hoping that Fire Authorities would agree in principle with the proposals for cost sharing and with the progress that had been made to date with the project.

There remained great uncertainty with regard to the costs and savings and it was further reported that the current grant for Control operations would be withdrawn by Government. Any new grant would have to reflect actual costs for each Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report and potential for significant resource implications in the future in respect of the Emergency Service Mobile Communications (ESMCP) project be noted; and
- b) That Government continue to be challenged about the transfer and distribution of costs related to the ESMCP.

6 WW1 Tribute event, Ypres – West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Band attendance

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive submitted a report which sought Member support for the attendance of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Military Band at WW1 commemorative events in Ypres, Belgium on 10 and 11 November 2014.

Transport costs would be covered by the Authority (£2,000) and a Sports and Social grant had been awarded to cover additional fuel costs. The Band were paying for their own accommodation.

RESOLVED

- a) That the invitation for the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Band to attend the WW1 commemorative events in Ypres, Belgium on 10 and 11 November 2014 be noted;
- b) That, in light of the prestigious nature of the events to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of WW1, approval be given for the Chair, Vice Chair and a Principal Officer to attend to as representatives of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority; and
- c) That it be noted that the anticipated cost of attendance at b) above would be approximately £1,200 (not including subsistence expenses) which could be met from within existing budgetary provision.

7 Annual update of Information Governance Arrangements and Improvement Plan

Members received a report of the Chief Legal and Governance Officer which provided an annual update on the implementation of Information Governance arrangements within West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and of progress made towards the introduction of an Information Security Management System.

It was reported that continuous improvement had been made since its introduction in 2008 with a current 92% rate of compliance and full compliance with the Protective Security arrangements. Compliance against the information security standard had reduced however due to the implementation of new standards.

Members sought further information about;

- ISG 14 – induction process, and
- External access to silent witness footage

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8 West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Information Charges update – fire reports

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Legal and Governance Officer which advised of the most recent position regarding requests for incident reports following approval for the re-introduction of charges in January 2014.

Since its implementation in April 2014, 98 requests for reports had been received which had produced an income of £2,000 on a cost recovery basis only.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9 Quarterly Financial Review

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which presented an overview of the financial performance of the Authority for the first 5 months of the current financial year. The report provided information on revenue and capital expenditure and debtors and creditors.

Members were advised that there would be an anticipated underspend in the revenue budget of £0.89m and this had been due to variations in the following;

- Firefighters' salaries (more leavers than expected, industrial action and overtime payments)
- Cost of industrial action
- Cost of supplies and services (unscheduled replacement of PPE clothing)

It was reported that there would be a likely revenue balance at the end of the financial year of £14m and significant work was reported to be in progress in respect of the capital plan although some slippage would be likely by the end of the financial year due to the nature of capital expenditure.

Members sought further information on the following;

- Closer working with the Environment Agency and District Councils in respect of flood mitigation (shared use of resources)
- Delays with delivery of the Leeds Combined Aerial Rescue Platform (CARP)
- Installation of silent witness cameras

There had been no borrowing in the previous financial year as a result of the positive cash flow caused by the early receipt of government grant. The same situation was anticipated for 2014 – 15 and local District Councils had been given the opportunity to borrow from the Fire Authority in the short term.

Outstanding debt at 30 June 2014 was reported to be £205,206 and not as detailed in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the revised revenue budget be approved; and
- c) That the revised capital plan be approved.

10 Treasury Management Annual Report 2013 – 14

Members considered a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2013 – 14. The report reviewed borrowing and investment performance, prudential indicators and risk and compliance issues.

It was reported that £6.7m had been invested as at the end of the 2013 – 14 financial year and the Authority had operated fully within its approved Treasury Management strategy.

In response to Member concern at the low level of interest earned throughout the year, the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer reminded Committee that this had been due to very low interest rates (0.4%) and the strategy to limit investment to £3m per institution. This strategy had since been changed and investment of £6m per institution was permitted under the current approved Treasury Management Strategy. The return on the investments was anticipated to increase in the 2014 – 15 financial year although, owing to the Authority's investment strategy and the low interest rates, the increase would not be significant.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11 Holmfirth Mast Site Purchase

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

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which sought approval for the purchase of the mast site at Holmfirth from West Yorkshire Police which had become surplus to their requirements. The mast was still required for the relay of alert messages to Retained Firefighters working in the area.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the purchase of the mast site at Holmfirth from West Yorkshire Police for the sum detailed in the report now submitted.

12 Banking tender

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

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer advised the Committee on progress on the banking tender process.

Chair