

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD ON 1 OCTOBER 2010

AT FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW

Present : Councillors A McKenna (In the Chair), M Akhtar, V Binney, A Castle, P Harrand, M Iqbal, M Khan, A Manifold, D Ridgway and B Smith (as substitute for Councillor J Dodds)

Apologies : Councillors J Dodds, R Pryke and D Gray

12 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 9 July 2010 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

13 URGENT ITEMS

None.

14 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC – SECTION 100a, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

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 and press 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 in Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972
E12	Water Office – hydrant maintenance	23	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs

E13	Capital Expenditure Hunslet Fire Station maintenance	24	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs
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15 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in any matter under discussion at the meeting.

16 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance Officer which presented the quarterly overview of the financial position of the Authority to end September 2010.

The overall forecast was for a £0.6m underspend in the revenue budget due the following key areas of activity;

- Wholetime firefighters (overspend) – overtime payments (£590,000)
- Retained firefighters (underspend) –reduced availability and therefore a reduction in spending on retained firefighters call-out fees (£330,000)
- Brigade control (underspend) – vacancies (£136,000)
- Support staff (underspend) – existing unfilled vacancies (£342,000)
- Capital financing charges (underspend) - £105,000

Members considered detail of the slippage of capital expenditure into the current year which revised the capital plan from £12.769m to £11.887m and discussed the refurbishment programme in the light of equality issues and the requirement to provide appropriate facilities on-station.

Details of the Management Board expenditure approval on schemes in the approved capital plan were attached as an annex to the report now submitted. It was further reported that there had been no great change in the overall economic position and, therefore, it was unlikely that the current approved Treasury Management Strategy would need to be revised. Members were advised of the current position with regard to debtors and creditors with 96% of all invoices being paid within the required 30 days.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That the revised revenue budget and capital plans be approved.

17 FLOOD REVIEW – UDPATE

The Director of Operations submitted a report which advised Members of the work completed following the floods of 2007 and the progress against the West Yorkshire Fire

and Rescue Service flood response capability project.

It was reported that recent capital approvals had provided an enhanced flood response capability and it was anticipated that the project would be completed and all equipment available, by the end of March 2011.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

18 POPPYCALL PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Fire Safety and Community Relations which informed Members of the ongoing work and partnership agreement with the Royal British Legion Poppycall scheme.

It was reported that the pilot scheme had commenced in January 2010 and indications were that, whilst the numbers of Home Fire Safety Checks generated through the scheme was not as great as anticipated, it served as an effective enhancement to the work of community safety. Members were advised that activity within the scheme would be monitored on a six-monthly basis.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

19 REVIEW OF STANDING CONFERENCES

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which invited Members to consider the current list of standing conferences attended by Members.

The list, approved in October 2007, comprised the following conferences which were attended by Members on the basis of one Member from each political group;

- LGA Fire Conference
- LGA Annual Conference
- Fire and Rescue Conference
- Emergency Planning Society Conference
- Fire and Rescue expo (now subsumed into the Fire and Rescue Conference)

Costs of attendance at the conferences had been met from within existing budgetary provision and would continue to be met from this provision.

Members debated the purpose, relevance and comparative worth of conference attendance and the opportunity it presented in terms of Member training within the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the standing list of conferences be approved as follows;
 - LGA Fire Conference
 - LGA Annual Conference
 - Fire and Rescue Conference
- (ii) That attendance at the conferences be approved on the basis of 1:1:1 (1 Member from each political group);
- (iii) That those Members attending conferences on behalf of the Authority undertake to cascade their learning back to their individual political groups; and
- (iv) That relevant allowances be payable to attending Members as appropriate.

20 LOCAL REFERENDA – CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance Officer which presented detail of the response to a consultation paper on local referenda.

A response had been sent on behalf of the Authority and referred to two specific issues;

- Double lock mechanism – should be extended to Fire and Police Authorities
- Earlier notification of capping criteria to assist budget planning

RESOLVED

That the content of the response to the Local Referenda consultation paper be noted.

21 REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE – UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on the national FireControl project in a report of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.

The original intention of cost effectiveness had come under increasing scrutiny and, due to changes in the operating environment and the recent change of national government, the future of the Regional Control Centres had become more uncertain. It was reported, however, that any formal decision had yet to be taken based, in the main, upon the success of the functionality of the software contract.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

22 FIRE FORMULA REVIEW – CONSULTATION

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report which presented the draft response to the consultation paper on proposed changes to the Fire Formula.

Members were advised that two main changes had been proposed as follows;

- Update of base data from 1998 – 99 to 2006 – 2009 – it was reported that this would disadvantage those Authorities which had made cost efficiencies and reward high spending Authorities
- Floors mechanism adjustment – preferred option would be to leave it as close to the average as possible

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the draft response as detailed in the report now submitted.

23 WATER OFFICE – HYDRANT MAINTENANCE

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

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Operations which sought to inform Members of the Authority's obligations with regard to the provision of water supplies for fire fighting and associated costs.

It was reported that there was an ongoing dispute with the Authority's water provider in respect of hydrant maintenance.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

24 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE – HUNSLET FIRE STATION MAINTENANCE

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

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which sought approval for the refurbishment of Hunslet Fire station to be funded from the approved capital programme.

RESOLVED

- (i) That approval be given to the proposed capital expenditure as detailed in the report now submitted for Hunslet Fire Station refurbishment; and
- (ii) That it be noted that building control and planning authority permission would be

required for the scheme.

Chair