



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 11 October 2019

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Councillor A Tait (in the chair), J Fenton-Glynn, P Harrand, N Mohammed, D O'Donovan, F Shaheen, J Sunderland (as substitute for Councillor R Downes for agenda items 6 – E11 only Min nos. 16 – 21 refer) and S Tulley

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Councillors C Anderson, R Downes, J Fenton-Glynn, R Grahame and D Hall

10 Chair's announcements – Councillor Gerald Wilkinson

Members stood in silent tribute in memory of Councillor Gerald Wilkinson who had passed away on 4 October 2019. Councillor Wilkinson had been a Member of the Fire Authority between 2006 – 2008 and again in 2012 – 2015.

11 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2019 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

12 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

13 Urgent items

None.

14 Admission of the public

RESOLVED

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item 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 this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of the descriptions specified

AGENDA ITEM NO.	TITLE OF REPORT	MINUTE NUMBER (to be added)	Description of exempt information by reference to the paragraph number in Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972
E11	Boiler replacements – stores and transport building, FSHQ	21	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs

15 Declarations of interest

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

16 Quarterly financial review

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented a quarterly financial review of the financial position of the Authority over the first five months of the current financial year.

Members were advised that a number of adjustments had been made to the contingencies budget since the date of the last meeting as detailed in the report and this, coupled with additional revenue savings of £499,000, had increased the general fund balance year-end estimate to £5.503m. The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer took the opportunity to advise that, since the papers were issued, there had been two further transfers from the contingency budgets - £800k for the Grey Book pay award and £224k for support staff posts as approved at the 4 October meeting of the Human Resources Committee. Members were advised that this would result in a revised contingency budget of £1.308m.

It was further reported that 41% of the capital plan (including actual payment and commitments) had been used whilst recognising the fact that the largest proportion of capital spend occurred in the latter part of the financial year due to extended procurement processes. An adjustment to the capital plan of £30,000 was also reported together with virements totalling £112,500 approved by Management Board in accordance with the Authority's Constitution.

No new borrowing had been made since the last meeting and one capital receipt of £24,500 was reported in respect of the sale in August 2019 of a Combined Aerial Rescue Platform (CARP).

Members raised the following issues;

- Government grant for the installation of electric vehicle charging points
- Likely percentage of the capital plan that would not be complete at the year end, and
- The proportion of outstanding debt which could be related to special service charges

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the revised capital plan be approved; and
- c) The transfer of budget to contingencies be approved.

17 Reserves Strategy

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which sought endorsement of the Authority's Reserves Strategy 2019 / 20 – 2022 / 23 which was attached to the report now submitted together with the transfer of reserves from the General Fund to Earmarked Reserves.

It was reported that, due to an underspend in the revenue budget in 2018 – 19, £0.117m had been transferred from the General Fund to the Service Support Earmarked Reserves to fund projects and initiatives which would generate savings over the longer term. Members were advised that the transfer had been necessary in order to maintain the General Fund balance at £5m which represented the minimum amount required to support the Authority's risk register. Detail of the planned use of earmarked reserves was included in Reserves Strategy document.

Evidence from a recent survey by the National Fire Chiefs' Council under the guidance of the Fire Finance Network had revealed that that majority of Fire Authorities were in very similar positions with regard to the level and use of reserves.

RESOLVED

- a) That the Reserves Strategy 2019 / 20 – 2022 / 23 be approved; and
- b) That the transfer of £0.117m from the General Fund to Earmarked Reserves be approved.

18 Procurement Review – update

Members received a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which advised of progress to date with the review of procurement.

Approval for the review was given at the December 2018 meeting of the Executive Committee and Members were now advised of the progress to date including detail of a number of tasks which were in-progress. Implementation of the review recommendations was on schedule and due for completion by December 2019.

The cost of the appointment on a 1-year contract of the interim Procurement Manager (£60k) had been met from Earmarked Reserves and it was anticipated that improvements to procurement practice would realise efficiencies in the longer term.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

19 Review of standing list of conferences

The Chief Legal and Governance Officer submitted a report which invited consideration of the current list of standing conferences attended by Members.

The list, last approved in October 2016, comprised the following conferences;

- LGA Fire Conference (on a 1:1:1 basis)
- LGA Annual Conference (on a 1:1:1 basis)
- LGA Fire Leadership Academy (funded by the Local Government Association)

RESOLVED

- a) That the standing list of conferences be approved as follows;
 - LGA Fire Conference
 - LGA Annual Conference
 - LGA Fire Leadership Academy
- b) That relevant allowances be payable to attending Members as appropriate; and
- c) That the standing list of conferences be reviewed in September 2022.

20 Replacement of ICT training facilities

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which sought approval for the purchase of replacement ICT training facilities both on-station and at Headquarters.

It was reported that the current equipment had limited functionality and was coming to the end of useful life. Members were advised that the proposed replacement equipment, included in the approved capital plan, would be procured through the existing NHS framework agreement and would provide enhanced and more intuitive training facilities.

RESOLVED

That the purchase of replacement ICT training facilities equipment be approved as detailed in the report now submitted.

21 Boiler replacement – stores and transport building, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

(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, due to the unexpected failure of the current central heating boiler system, sought approval for a new capital expenditure scheme to purchase a new upgraded replacement boiler installation in the stores and transport building at Headquarters.

RESOLVED

That capital expenditure on a new boiler system be approved at a cost detailed in the report now submitted.

Chair