



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 16 July 2021

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Councillor S Tulley (in the chair), C Anderson, D Hall, J Illingworth, N Mohammed, D O'Donovan, M Pollard, I Sanders, F Shaheen, J Sunderland (as substitute for Councillor Downes) and L Whitehouse

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Councillor R Downes

1 Chair's announcements

The Chair extended a warm welcome to those Members who were both new to the Authority and new to the membership of the Finance and Resources Committee.

He wished to record his thanks for the commitment of his predecessor, Councillor Angela Tait, who had been chair of the committee previously and who was no longer a Member of the Fire Authority.

2 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2021 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3 Matter arising

None.

4 Urgent items

None.

5 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 these items, 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
E9	Firefighter contamination project	10	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs

6 Declarations of interest

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

7 Treasury Management outturn 2020 – 21

Members received a report from the Chief Finance & Procurement Officer presenting the Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 which reviewed borrowing and investment performance, prudential indicators and risk and compliance issues.

It was noted that Fire Authority had been a net investor for all of 2020 – 21 and had made investments totalling £36.7m at the year end with an average external borrowing at £41.1m during the course of the year. No new long-term loans had been taken out during the financial year and no short-term loans were outstanding. Members were advised that £207k had been made on investments during the course of the year with an average interest rate of 0.5%.

Members were further advised that statutory, regulatory risk, prudential indicators and compliance requirements had been fully complied with during the year. It was reported for Members' information that all future treasury management work would be done in-house with effect from 1 August 2021.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8 Environmental Working Group activities 2020 - 21

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted a report which advised of the activities for the Environmental Working Group during 2020 – 21.

Members received detailed information on;

- Environmental initiatives
- Usage of gas, water and electricity
- Textile, book and trade waste recycling
- Carbon emissions, and
- Notable environmental incidents

Clarification was sought and given on the following issues;

- Increase in gas usage
- Involvement of the Environment Agency in relevant notable incidents

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9 Quarterly financial review

Members considered a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented the quarterly review of the financial position of the Fire Authority for the first three months of the current financial year.

It was reported that, since the date of the last report, £0.196m had been transferred from the general contingencies budget due to unforeseen costs relating to;

- Earlier than expected retirements and consequent increase in recruit cohort in September (4 additional recruits)
- Long-term sickness and staff vacancies
- Staff budget adjustments, and
- Budgetary provision for three additional crew commanders at on-call stations

Members were reminded that no provision had been made for a pay award for all employees in line with the Chancellor's Autumn statement. Following pay offers for both green and grey book employees it was likely that the additional cost to the Authority would be £0.890m in the current year rising to £1.08m in a full year. This would be funded by a £0.890mk transfer from the capital finance budget with no impact on the Authority's revenue budget in 2021 – 22.

Information was also provided related to the COVID 19 grant funding and the impact of the pandemic on the councils' collection fund for council tax and business rates (£2.21m reduction in

income for the Fire Authority) with 75% of irrecoverable losses being provided for through an income guarantee scheme. It was reported that the forecast £276k Covid 19 grant remaining at 31 March 2022 would be used to fund this shortfall in funding from council tax and business rates deficits.

An underspend of £0.231m was forecast at this stage in the year and budgets would be reviewed in September under the improved budget monitoring RAG-rating system

Detail of expenditure and other related issues in terms of the COVID grant, (totalling £2.599m and held in an earmarked reserve) were detailed in the report now submitted.

Members were advised that the approved five-year capital plan (£57.585m) had included schemes to the value of £16.522m in the current financial year. The total value of slipped schemes into 2021 – 22 was reported to be £5.075m and £8.060m was to be slipped into the 2022 – 23 financial year in respect of the development of the Headquarters site, the rebuild of Keighley fire station and various ICT schemes.

Additional information was sought and provided to the meeting in respect of the following;

- Use of employee contingency budget
- Loss of income and irrecoverable debt
- Scheme slippage

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 Firefighter contamination project

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

Members received a report from the Director of Service Delivery which sought approval for the drawdown of capital funds to procure and install external Personal Protective Equipment storage shelters on each of the 40 fire stations.

RESOLVED

That the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment storage shelters be approved as detailed in the report now submitted.

Chair