



Minutes

Full Authority

Date: 29 February 2024

Time: 10:30

Venue: Dewsbury Town Hall

Present: Cllr D O'Donovan (in the chair), Cllrs Almas, Bowden, Downes, Farmer, Garvani, Hall, Hawkins, Hussain, Keith, Kirton, Mohammed, Pollard, Renshaw, Shaheen, Sutcliffe, Tulley and Wood

In Attendance:

Apologies: Cllrs Anderson, Fazal and Zaman

1 Chair's announcements

The chair announced that it was the final meeting of the WYFRA for the 2023/24 municipal year and thanked Members for their attendance commitment to the Authority over the preceding year. A certificate of long service was presented to Mr Ian Brandwood, the Chief Employment Services Officer who is due to retire on 31 May 2024.

2 Admission of the public

There were no items that required exclusion of the press and public.

3 Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

4 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda.

5 Minutes of meeting held on 15 December 2023

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 December 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

6 Matters arising

There were no matters arising

7 Minutes of Committees held since 15 December 2023 and of other relevant Outside Bodies

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of Committees and other relevant outside bodies be received as circulated.

8 Calendar of Meetings 2024/25

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which sought approval for the proposed programme of meetings for 2024 – 25.

RESOLVED

That the programme of meetings 2024 – 2025 be approved as detailed at Annex A to the report.

9 Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted a report which had been produced in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and which sought approval for the Authority's Pay Policy Statement 2024 – 25.

Members requested and were provided with clarification of the total number of employees and the discretion of the Authority to augment membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Members also noted that the increases in Firefighter salaries were not met by government funding.

RESOLVED

That the Pay Policy Statement 2024 – 25 be approved.

10 Treasury Management Strategy

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which sought approval for the Treasury Management Strategy 2024 – 25.

Members sought and were given clarification of the additional voluntary revenue budget contributions being made to capital as detailed in appendix D to the report now submitted. Members also discussed the possible use of the voluntary contributions made now, towards statutory contributions required in the future which may not be affordable. The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer also explained that many of the major assets held by WYFRA are longer term assets, such as buildings and premises.

RESOLVED

That the following be approved;

- a) Treasury Management Practices outlined in the report
- b) the capital strategy outlined in the report
- c) the borrowing strategy outlined in the report
- d) the investment strategy outlined in the report and at Appendix B to the report.
- e) the policy for provision of repayment of debt outlined in Appendix D to the report
- d) the Treasury Management Prudential indicators in Appendix E to the report
- e) the Capital Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 in Appendix F to the report

11 Capital Investment Plan/Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

Members considered a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented the details of the revenue budget for 2024/25 along with the four-year Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme. Included within the report were details of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25, a standstill budget, a forecast funding position, and the reserves strategy.

Members thanked the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer for such an in-depth detailed report.

Members challenged the report author on the revenue contributions to capital.

Cllr Pollard moved an amendment to the budget to vire £30K from the contributions to capital to the Prince's Trust Youth Intervention work. The amendment was seconded by Cllr Hall. A recorded vote was requested on the amendment when the following results were recorded:

Councillors Farmer, Hall, Kirton and Pollard voted in favour of the amendment.

Councillors Almas, Bowden, Garvani, Hawkins, Hussain, Keith, Mohammed, O'Donovan, Renshaw, Shaheen, Tulley and Wood voted against the amendment.

Councillors Downes and Sutcliffe abstained.

The amendment was declared lost.

Members agreed that the proposal would be investigated and added to a future budget review so an appropriate amount could be calculated and awarded.

Members requested and were provided with clarification of the following:

- the net figure of the amendments to Government Grants received.
- a standstill budget as opposed to a revenue budget.
- scrutiny of budget growths.
- future recruitment, changes to establishment, governance of new posts.
- the Service Grant 2024/25.
- the Collection Fund.

Members noted that the proposed capital investments are in the best interest of Firefighters and that all equipment must be fit for the 21st century, which is difficult to plan when there is no certainty in funding.

Councillor O'Donovan proposed a precept increase as detailed in the report now submitted. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tulley. A recorded vote was requested on the proposal when the following results were recorded:

Councillors Farmer, Hall, Kirton and Pollard voted against the precept increase

Councillors Almas, Bowden, Downes, Garvani, Hawkins, Hussain, Keith, Mohammed, O'Donovan, Renshaw, Shaheen, Sutcliffe, Tulley and Wood voted for the precept increase.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

- a) That Members give approval to the Prudential Indicators in respect of:
- (i) the Capital financing Requirement as set out in paragraph 3.2.
 - (ii) the level of External Debt also set out in paragraph 3.3.
 - (iii) the Authorised limit for external debt as set out in paragraph 3.3.
 - (iv) the Operational Boundary for external debt also set out in paragraph 3.3.
- b) Having considered the recommendations of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer on service delivery and related budget requirements and, having taken account of the views of the consultees and, acting in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) ("the Act") and, having approved a capital expenditure programme for the financial year 2024/25 of £35.587m and, having calculated its basic amount of council tax for the year by dividing its council tax requirement by its council tax bases, which the Authority notes have been determined by the District Councils, the figures are as follows for financial year 2024/25.

Authority	Tax Base 2024/25
Bradford	144,890.00
Calderdale	64,017.71
Kirklees	126,342.29
Leeds	242,591.40
Wakefield	106,407.00
TOTAL	684,248.40

- c) The Authority calculates its council tax requirements under Sections 40 to 47 of the Act for Financial Year 2024/25 as the aggregate of the following:

The Authority calculates the aggregate of (A) as set out in Appendix B.

- £113,913,658 The expenditure the Authority estimates it will incur in the year in performing its functions and will charge to the revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices.
- £0 The allowance as the Authority estimates will be appropriate for contingencies in relation to amounts to be charged or credited to the revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practice.
- £0 The financial reserves which the Authority estimates it will be appropriate to raise in year for meeting estimated future expenditure.
- £0 Financial reserves as are sufficient to meet so much of the amount estimated by the Authority to be a revenue account deficit for any earlier financial year as has not been provided for.

The Authority calculates the aggregate of (B) as set out in Appendix B

- £59,524,340 The income which it estimates that will accrue to it in the year and which it will credit to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices other than income which it estimates will accrue to it in respect of any precept issued by it to be.
- £0 The amount of financial reserves which the Authority estimates that it will use in order to provide for the items mentioned.

Council Tax Requirement

- £54,389,318 The aggregate calculated under subsection 42a (2) (aggregate of A) of the Act exceeds the amount calculated under subsection 42a (3) (aggregate of B) which is calculated to be the council tax requirement for the year.

Basic amount of council tax

- £79.49 The Authority calculates its basic amount of council tax by dividing the council tax requirement by the council tax base. The council tax requirement is £54,389,318 and the council tax base is 684,248.4 which is equal to £79.49 at band D. This calculation meets the requirement under S42B of the Act.

d) The Authority calculates the Council Tax sums pursuant to Section 47 of the Act as follows:

Band A	£52.99
Band B	£61.82
Band C	£70.66
Band D	£79.49
Band E	£97.15
Band F	£114.82
Band G	£132.48
Band H	£158.98

e) The Authority calculates the resultant precept amounts payable by each constituent District Council pursuant to Section 48 of the Act as follows:

District	Precept
Bradford	£11,516,970
Calderdale	£5,088,619
Kirklees	£10,042,655
Leeds	£19,283,028
Wakefield	£8,458,046
TOTAL	£54,389,318

f) Resolved that the precept for each constituent District Council, as calculated and set out above, be issued to them pursuant to Section 40 of the Act.

12 Customer Service Excellence Assessment 2023

Members received a report which provided an update on the Customer Service Excellence Assessment 2023.

It was reported that the Authority had attained the Customer Service Excellence standard with full compliance against all 57 elements including 33 Compliance Plus awards.

Members acknowledged the report as a good news story and discussed the use of the Morphus tool and the ongoing Operational Staff Survey on Culture.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 Performance Management Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Corporate Services which advised of the Authority's performance against key performance indicators for the period 1 April 2023 – 11 February 2024.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

14 Programme of Change

The Director of Service Support submitted a report updating members of the progress in relation to the Programme of Change 2023-24.

Members requested and were given further information regarding the rebuild of Keighley Fire Station

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Chair