

Minutes

Full Authority

Date: 27 February 2025

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present:

Cllr D O'Donovan (in the chair), Cllrs I Ahmed, A Ali, K Bruce, L Buckley, C Burke, A Butt, E Carlisle, R Dickenson, R Downes, D Hall, T Hinchcliffe, C Keith, A Parnham, M Pollard, K Renshaw, F Shaheen, U Sutcliffe, and R Wood

Apologies:

Cllr J Bryan, T Salam and S Tulley

47.Chair's announcements

48.Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

49.Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

50.Declarations of interest

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

51.Minutes of meeting held on 13 December 2024

Resolved

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 December 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record

52.Matters arising

There were no matters arising

53.Minutes of Committees held since 13 December 2024 and of other relevant Outside Bodies

Resolved

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

54.Calendar of Meetings 2025/26

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which sought approval for the proposed programme of meetings for 2025/26.

Resolved

That the programme of meetings 2025/26 be approved as detailed at Annex A to the report

55.Updates to WYFRA Constitution

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which sought approval for amendments to the WYFRA Constitution.

Resolved

That the Constitution be updated in accordance with the amendments listed in Annex A to the report

56.Treasury Management Strategy

The Director of Finance and Procurement submitted a report which sought approval for the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26.

Members sought and were given clarification of the revenue contributions figure, which had been updated upon receipt of the final notification of funding. Members expressed concern over the uncertainties in the budget and were assured that the Authority has strategies in place to ensure we have continued value for money, that the budget is scrutinised by the Executive Management Team (ELT) and continues to meet strategic priorities. This has been proven in the recent External Audit.

Members welcomed the low risk investment strategy and were assured of the safeguarding measures in place.

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 2025/26 – 2029/30 in Appendix F to the report

57. Pay Policy Statement

The Director of People and Culture 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 2025/26.

Members challenged the report author on how the pay policy addresses recruitment and retention challenges and were pleased to note there is some flexibility to pay market supplements and that the Authority continues to complete comparative benchmarking exercises across the private sector but that wages were required to be kept in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales. Members further challenged the report author regarding the contingency plans in place to cover National Insurance rises but were pleased to see that the lowest paid employees are paid fairly, and above the National Living Wage (NLW) and the Real Living Wage (RLW).

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 be approved.

58. Capital Investment Plan/Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

Members considered a report of the Director of Finance and Procurement which presented the details of the revenue budget for 2025/26 along with the four-year Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme. Included within the report were details of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2025/26, a standstill budget, a forecast funding position, and the reserves strategy.

Members thanked the Director of Finance and Procurement for such an in-depth detailed report.

Members challenged the report author to provide the amount of increase required to the precept, should all the revenue bids that have been submitted be approved, which would be £25.73 and the decision making process for approval. Members asked how the medium term financial plan accounts for new and emerging fire risks and the risks associated with

climate change, and further challenged the report author on the Motion Picture Licencing Company licence costs and the collection fund deficit.

Cllr Pollard moved an amendment to the budget to set the precept increase to 4.99% and use monies from the medium term funding impact reserve to fund a lower increase to the precept. The amendment was seconded by Cllr Hall. A recorded vote was requested on the amendment when the following results were recorded:

Councillors Buckley, Dickenson, Hall, and Pollard voted in favour of the amendment.

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Bruce, Burke, Butt, Carlisle, Downes, Hinchcliffe, Keith, O'Donovan, Parnham Renshaw, Shaheen, Sutcliffe and Wood voted against the amendment.

The amendment was declared lost.

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

Councillors Buckley, Dickenson, Hall, and Pollard voted against the £5 precept increase

Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Bruce, Burke, Butt, Carlisle, Downes, Hinchcliffe, Keith, O'Donovan, Parnham Renshaw, Shaheen, Sutcliffe and Wood voted for the £5 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 3.4.
 - (iv) the Operational Boundary for external debt also set out in paragraph 3.4.
- b) Having considered the recommendations of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Procurement 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 2025/26 of £11.031m 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 2025/26.

Authority	Tax Base 2025/26
Bradford	147,730.00
Calderdale	66,245.58
Kirklees	128,741.90
Leeds	243,974.10
Wakefield	106,690.00
TOTAL	693,381.58

c) The Authority calculates its council tax requirements under Sections 40 to 47 of the Act for Financial Year 2025/26 as the aggregate of the following:

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

£117,196,376 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.

£188,149 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

£58,424,418 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.

£188,149 The amount of financial reserves which the Authority estimates that it will use in order to provide for the items mentioned.

- Council Tax Requirement

£58,583,808

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

£84.49

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 £58,583,807 and the council tax base is 693,381.58 which is equal to £84.49 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	£56.33
Band B	£65.71
Band C	£75.10
Band D	£84.49
Band E	£103.27
Band F	£122.04
Band G	£140.82
Band H	£168.98

- 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	£12,481,708
Calderdale	£5,597,089
Kirklees	£10,877,402
Leeds	£20,613,371
Wakefield	£9,014,238
TOTAL	£58,583,808

- 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.

59. Programme of Change Update

The Director of Service Support submitted a report updating members of the progress in relation to the Programme of Change 2024/25.

Members requested an update on the digital data strategy.

Members challenged the report author to explain how the programme of change supports front line engagement and how success is measured.

Resolved

That the report be noted

60.HMICFRS Update

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which updated Members on the progress of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Actions.

Members welcomed the proactive safe and well visits completed by WYFRS and welcomed the work the service does with other agencies, whilst recognising that working with multi agencies causes issues with meeting the strenuous targets set.

Resolved

That the report be noted

61.Grenfell Phase 2 Update

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Delivery which gave Members an update on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report, its associated impacts and the ongoing work of WYFRS and its partners.

Members welcomed the thorough, in-depth report and were pleased to see all the recommendations had been acted upon with even more added.

Members challenged the report author on the communication strategies employed with the responsible persons and the multiple agencies involved, the response from Yorkshire Water at incidents and the changes made to fire safety procedures.

Resolved

That the report be noted

62.Local Remediation Acceleration Plan

The Director of Service Delivery presented a report which provided Members with information on the Local Remediation Acceleration Plan and the work the WYFRS Fire Protection Team have been undertaking to support the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).

Resolved

That the report be noted

63.Charitable Donation of Used Appliances

The Director of Service Support presented a report which requested approval to donate eight used appliances to the Ukraine and UK Charities as part of the disposal strategy.

The report author advised that the number of appliances to be donated to Ukraine had been reduced to four since writing the report now submitted, due to the logistics in transporting the appliances, which subject to approval would be leaving the UK on 7 April. Members were reassured that the remaining two appliances would be ring fenced for future convoys.

Members challenged the report author regarding donating appliances to other war-torn countries, the lost sales revenue, previous donations and questioned if this would be a one off occurrence.

Resolved

That the donation of six vehicles to Ukraine SES, and two vehicles to UK organisations be approved

64.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 2024 to 1 December 2024.

Resolved

That the report be noted

Chair