

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD ON 8 JULY 2011

AT FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW

Present: Councillors J Hughes (in the Chair), V Binney (as substitute for Councillor D Hall), R Brown (as substitute for Councillor D Hopkins), J Dodds (as substitute for Councillor B Smith), R Grahame, P Harrand, M Khan, D Ridgway, C Townsley (as substitute for Councillor C Bampton-Smith) and A Wallis

Apologies: Councillors C Bampton-Smith, B Smith, D Hopkins, D Hall and A McKenna

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 1 April 2011 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 URGENT ITEM

None.

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

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 and press 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	Description of exempt information by reference to the paragraph number in Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972
E8	Training Centre – environmental improvements	8	Paragraph 3 (Financial or Business Affairs) of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972.

4 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor R Grahame declared a personal and non-prejudicial in agenda item no. 5 (Fire Safety (Protection of Tenants) Bill (Min no. 5 refers).

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

5 FIRE SAFETY (PROTECTION OF TENANTS) BILL

The Director of Fire Safety submitted a report which set out the purpose of the proposed Fire Safety (Protection of Tenants) Bill, notably to make it mandatory to install smoke detection in all rented property.

Members were advised that officers had been in correspondence with M.P.'s and the Fire Minister in support of the Bill proposed by Adrian Sanders MP. However, it was becoming apparent that the Ministry was of the opinion that further legislation was not required as rented accommodation was covered by the existing Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

Members expressed concern at the response and were advised that some of the local district councils did install smoke detection equipment as part of their scheduled refurbishment programme – whilst a step in the right direction, the work was not completed on the preferred risk basis.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That a letter be sent to all the West Yorkshire local authority housing directors encouraging the fitting of smoke detection equipment to all rented properties as a matter of some urgency.

6 NRAT / USAR ASSURANCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Director of Operations which provided Members with a summary of the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Assurance review of this Authority undertaken in January 2011.

The assessment examined and measured the Authority's USAR capabilities which had been financed by central government funding as part of the New Dimension framework. Members were advised that there had been one area of concern – the Service's canine capability. It was reported that both dogs working on USAR would be qualified by the end of August 2011.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee identifying progress with all the NRAT recommendations.

7 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report which presented the latest financial forecast based on expenditure and income in the first quarter of the current financial year.

The report projected an under spending of £0.277m on the approved revenue budget and highlighted the key variations which include;

- Underspending on employee expenses
- Potential overspending as a result of uninsured liability

Members were advised that £2.78m of capital schemes would be brought forward in the current year. It was reported that there would likely to be some slippage in the current year's capital programme and it was anticipated that total expenditure would be around £10m for the current financial year.

In terms of treasury management, the Chief Finance Officer presented details of borrowing and investment activity for the first three months of the year and reported that it was unlikely that interest rates would change until early 2012 and advantage continued to be taken of the low variable rates.

RESOLVED

- (i) That subject to an amendment in paragraph 3.2 Borrowing (LOBO) which had **not** been increased at the last review, the report be noted;
- (ii) That the revised revenue budget be approved; and
- (iii) That approval be given to the revised capital plan.

8 TRAINING CENTRE – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

(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 Corporate Resources which sought project start approval for environmental improvements to the main training centre building.

RESOLVED

- (i) That approval be given to the proposed capital expenditure upon the environmental improvement project for the training centre; and
- (ii) That the requirement to obtain building control or planning authority permission as appropriate be noted.

Chair