



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 24 January 2014

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Conference Room, Oakroyd Hall, Fire Service Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Councillors B Smith (in the Chair), P Caffrey, J Cummins, J Dodds, R Grahame, P Harrand, A Hussain, M Shaw, C Townsley and G Wilkinson

In Attendance: N/A

Apologies: Councillor G Thornton

31 Minutes of the last meeting

In response to a query relating to Min no. 28 (Industrial Action Contingency Plans) the Chief Fire Officer took the opportunity to advise Members that the cost of the action would be picked up by individual Fire and Rescue Authorities. It was also reported that, whilst there had been some encouraging signs for possible resolution, negotiations were still ongoing between the Government and the Fire Brigades' Union.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 29 November 2013 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

32 Urgent item

None.

33 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 and press were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of the description 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.
E10	Purchase of Land – replacement for Ossett Fire Station	40	Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs

34 Declarations of interest

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

35 Treasury Management Strategy 2014 – 15

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report which provided detail of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2014 / 15 which included information on the following;

- investment strategy
- borrowing strategy
- provision for repayment of debt
- treasury management indicators

Members were reminded that investment limits had been increased to £6m per approved institution which reflected the scale of the Authority's cash balances during the early part of the financial year following receipt of both the pension grant and the Revenue Support Grant from central Government.

It was further reported that the Co-op Bank had reviewed its corporate banking arrangements and had announced that it would not be renewing such contracts. The Authority would therefore be looking at a number of options to tender for new bankers in early 2015.

RESOLVED

That the Full Authority be recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015 – 16 including;

- a) the investment strategy in section 2.3 and Appendix A of the report
- b) the borrowing strategy in section 2.4
- c) the policy for provision of repayment of debt in Appendix C; and
- d) the treasury management indicators in Appendix D

36 Quarterly Financial Review

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which presented an overview of the financial performance of the Authority in the third quarter of the 2013 – 14 financial year.

The report projected an underspend in the revenue budget of £2.7m for the financial year which represented an increase of £0.45m over the previous forecast. The variances and underspend in the budget were due to the following main factors;

- Reduction in wholetime firefighter costs of £1.83m and support staff costs of £0.311m
- Reductions in supplies / services and transport costs
- Increased insurance and capital financing charges

It was reported that, in spite of the underspend, the Authority would have to identify additional savings of over £10m by 2018. The forecast balance at 31 March 2014 was £14.1m which would be needed to support the revenue budget towards the end of the next spending review period.

The 2013 / 14 capital plan had been revised in the current financial year from £13.709m to £16.48m which included schemes which had slipped from the previous year (including the construction of new fire stations).

Treasury Management had been the subject of a separate report on the agenda (Min no. 35 refers) and detail of the debt outstanding and investments at 31 December 2013 were advised as part of the budget process.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the revised revenue budget be approved; and
- c) That the revised capital plan be approved.

37 DCLG Consultation response – Transformational Funds for 2015 – 16 Bidding process

Members considered a report submitted jointly by the Director of Strategic Development and the Chief Finance and Procurement Officer which advised of a response that had been drafted and forwarded to Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in respect of the proposed bidding process for £30m transformational funding 2015 – 16 and for an additional £45m capital fire efficiency incentive funding.

It was reported, however, that the funds were not additional monies and had been drawn from cuts in fire service expenditure totals with the intention of shifting fire service expenditure into areas which would generate long term financial savings.

RESOLVED

That the response to the consultation process on the DCLG bidding process for Fire and Rescue Authority Transformation Funds 2015 – 16 be noted.

38 West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Information Charges – Fire reports

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which sought approval for the re-introduction of charges for the supply of Fire Reports and Fire Investigation Reports.

Members were advised that, due to the current financial constraints, it had been thought appropriate to re-introduce a charge and a comparison of charges made by other Fire and Rescue Services was contained within the report now submitted which revealed a range of £78 to £450.

The proposed charges were as follows;

Basic IRS report (Fire report)	£ 43.80
Full IRS report	£118.00
Full investigation report	£259.00

No charge had been made historically for information supplied to the police and it was proposed that this practice remain. The re-introduction of charging could provide additional income.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the re-introduction of charges for the supply of Fire Reports and Fire Investigation Reports at the levels detailed at paragraph 2.10 of the report now submitted.

39 Budget report 2014 / 2015

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer submitted a report which presented a draft revenue budget for 2014 / 15.

The report set out the following;

- a revised draft five-year capital investment plan (£43.23m)
- a service standstill budget of £87.905m
- a five year medium term financial plan

The report provided a summary of the current financial year and set out details of the draft 5-year capital plan along with details of a draft revenue budget and medium term financial plan.

It also gave detail of the draft local government finance settlement for 2014 / 15 and 2015 / 16 together with a comparison with the 2014 / 15 standstill budget. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Government had not yet announced details of the maximum precept allowed within the need for a referendum and this was unlikely to be received until early February.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted as a basis for discussions within the Authority's political groups.

40 Purchase of Land at Silkwood Park, Ossett – construction of replacement fire station

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

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which sought authorisation for the purchase of land at Silkwood Park, Ossett to allow for the construction of a new fire station to replace the existing Ossett Fire Station in accordance with the Authority's approved Integrated Risk Management Plan.

RESOLVED

That the site at Silkwood Park, Ossett be purchased for the sum detailed in the report now submitted.

