

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HELD ON 1 APRIL 2011

AT FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW

Present: Councillors A McKenna (in the Chair), M Akhtar, V Binney, A Castle, P Harrand, A Manifold, R Pryke, D Ridgway, B Smith (as substitute for Councillor M Khan), G Thornton and C Townsley (as substitute for Councillor D Gray).

Apologies: Councillors D Gray, M Iqbal and M Khan

52 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 21 January 2011 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

53 URGENT ITEM – INSURANCE RENEWALS

The Chair gave approval for this item to be considered on the grounds of urgency as a decision was required which would not admit of delay (Min no. 62 refers)

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

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items 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 these items, 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
E11	Vehicle Replacement Programme	63	Paragraph 3 (Financial or Business Affairs) of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972.

E12	Normanton – Receipt of tenders	64	Paragraph 3 (Financial or Business Affairs) of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972.
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55 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in any matter under discussion at the meeting save that in relation to agenda item E12 (Normanton – receipt of tenders, Min no. 64 refers), Councillor Castle declared a potential personal interest, left the room and took no part in the deliberations on that item.

56 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REVIEW

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

The report projected an under spending of £1.63m and set out details of the major variations in expenditure from the approved revenue budget. Members were advised that actual capital payments totalled £8.73m (73%) of the revised capital plan though it was unlikely that the whole of the plan would be delivered within the current financial year.

In terms of treasury management the Chief Finance Officer reported that there had been no new long term borrowing since the last meeting although the full outturn would not be known until the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were advised that 93.9% of invoices were now paid within a 30-day period, 73% of which within 10 days. This still fell a little short of the 100% target.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That the revised revenue budget and capital plans be noted; and
- (iii) That the detail of costs associated with the phased programme of ablution refurbishment at Fairweather Green station be reported back to the next meeting.

57 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE STRATEGY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided the annual update on the implementation of Information Governance

arrangements together with advice on the progress towards the introduction of an Information Security Management System (ISMS).

It was reported that, since August 2007 when an Internal Audit assessment of “limited assurance” was given with regard to the Authority’s Information and ICT governance arrangements, a subsequent audit had awarded a “substantial assurance” rating which represented significant improvement. Similarly, the 2010 Customer Service audit recognised that the Authority’s approach to Information Governance had been well structured and was over and above the required standard with the award of “Compliance Plus”.

Members were advised that major progress continued to be made towards meeting the requirements both of the Information Governance Framework and the ISMS with West Yorkshire taking a lead development role in collaborative work across the region.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

58 CHANGE TO COMAH CHARGE

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer submitted a report which outlined a proposed new COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) charging structure.

It was reported that, under the COMAH Regulations 1999, the Authority could charge a fee for operating its functions. A review of the charging structure had been undertaken for the recovery of reasonable costs associated with the production, review and testing of off-site emergency plans for site operators.

The existing charging system was based on level and time of staff involved in the work which gave little clarity with regard to any final charge. It was, therefore, now proposed, in line with other Fire Authorities, to introduce a fixed fee for each type of activity as detailed in the report now submitted.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the revised charging structure be approved;
- (ii) That the amounts quoted for cost recovery be considered as a minimum charge for the work undertaken; and
- (iii) That a list of the COMAH sites in West Yorkshire be circulated to all Members.

59 INTERNATIONAL FIRE INVESTIGATION CONFERENCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Fire Safety which sought approval for an officer to attend the International Fire Investigation Conference to be held in Nevada, USA on 1 – 6 May 2011.

The conference fees and accommodation costs were estimated to be approximately £700 which could be financed from within existing training budgetary provision. Travel costs would be met by the attending officer.

RESOLVED

- (i) That approval be given to the attendance of an officer at the International Fire Investigation Conference in Nevada, 1 – 6 May 2011; and
- (ii) That the associated course fees and accommodation costs be met by the Authority.

60 MEMBER MEDIA RELATIONS PROTOCOL

A new Member Media Relations protocol was proposed by the Director of Corporate Resources to formally support Members in their critical strategic and stewardship duties, particularly relevant in the light of current funding issues and the requirement for major service reconfiguration.

Such protocols currently existed for officers and senior management. It was recognised that officers' roles differed fundamentally from those of elected members who provided political and strategic leadership whilst ensuring public accountability and corporate probity.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the introduction of a Member Media Relations Protocol.

61 CONSULTATION ON FUTURE CONTROL ROOM SERVICES

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report which sought approval for the Authority's response (proposing a sector-led programme of improvements) on the future of Fire and Rescue Control services as detailed in the report now submitted. The consultation covered the following possible options;

- Localism and alternative control services without central intervention or financial support
- Development of common standards
- Greater collaboration between Fire and Rescue Authorities with some central intervention or support
- A standard networked solution (FireControl)

Given the Government's preferred scenario of a localist approach, it was reported that a project working group had been established in West Yorkshire which would ensure that West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's future control arrangements were delivered both efficiently and effectively.

It had been recognised that, cancellation of the FireControl project would require the Authority to invest significant capital expenditure in the medium term to replace the existing mobilising system. It was possible that a proportion of these costs would be met through government grant.

RESOLVED

- (i) That approval be given to the submission of a response on the future of Control Room Services on behalf of the Authority as detailed in an annex to the report now submitted; and
- (ii) That the establishment of a formal Working Group charged with reviewing and researching key staffing, technological and partnership options be noted.

62 INSURANCE RENEWALS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Finance officer which advised of the conclusion of negotiations of the insurance contract and subsequent premiums. It was reported that there would be an increase in premiums of £22,348 in 2010 / 11 due mainly to an increase in the size of the vehicle fleet.

The cost of the increase in premiums would be met from within the approved revenue budget (provision for pay and price increases).

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

63 VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

(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 approval for the vehicle replacement programme 2011 / 2012.

It was reported that contracts would be benchmarked in the future due to a contract charge imposed by Firebuy. Similarly, consideration was being given to the extension of vehicle life from 10 to 12 years.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the purchase of vehicles as detailed in the report now submitted.

64 NORMANTON FIRE STATION RE-DEVELOPMENT – RECEIPT OF TENDERS
(This item was considered as exempt information under Schedule 12 A (3) of the Local Government Act 1972 – business or financial affairs)

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which advised of the outcome of the tender process for the re-development of Normanton Fire Station as part of the implementation of the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2008 – 9 (IRMP) with a view to re-organising operational fire service cover in the north east Wakefield area.

RESOLVED

That the lowest tender, as submitted by Caddick Construction Ltd, for the re-development of Normanton Fire Station be accepted as detailed in the report now submitted.

Chair