

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL held at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes at 10:00 hours on Thursday 6 July 2017.

Members Present: Councillors Barnes, O'Quinn and Sheppard.

In attendance:

Mr M O'Brien (Interim Assistant Chief Fire Officer), Miss L. Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mrs V Chart (Assistant Director – Human Resources and Organisational Development), Mr. D. Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), Mr D Drummond (ITG Manager) and Mrs. K. Ward (Clerk).

056. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

056.1 It was noted that, in relation to matters on the agenda, no participating Member had any interest to declare under the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct for Members.

057. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

057.1 That Councillor Barnes be appointed Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

058. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

058.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dowling, Elford, Scott, Theobald and Tutt.

059. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND PROPOSES TO TAKE AT THE END OF THE AGENDA/CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

059.1 There were no urgent items for consideration.

060. NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES PANEL MEETING HELD ON 27 APRIL 2017

060.1 **RESOLVED** – That the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Panel held on 27 April 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (Copy in Minute Book)

061 CALLOVER

061.1 Members reserved the following item for debate:

062. Provisional Revenue Budget & Capital Programme Outturn 2016/17.

RESOLVED - That all other reports be resolved in accordance with the recommendations as detailed below

062. PROVISIONAL REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2016/17

062.1 The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer that reported on the provisional outturn position for 2016/17. (Copy in minute book).

- 062.2 This report contained the provisional revenue budget and capital programme outturn for 2016/17 along with an updated analysis of reserves and balances. The draft accounts had been prepared, signed and published and had been passed to the external auditor. The audited accounts must be approved by the Fire Authority and published by 30 September 2017.
- 062.3 The Revenue Budget outturn was underspent by £464,000 (previously forecast £558,000 underspent) which was 1.2% of the total revenue budget. It reflected a combination of successful achievement of key savings, identification of further savings in-year and some delays in sourcing additional capacity that had been addressed.
- 062.4 The Authority had previously agreed in principle that any underspend should be transferred into earmarked reserves to fund the costs of planned Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment. The report recommended that the £464,000 underspend be transferred into this reserve. The costs of the recruitment exercise were still to be finalised but it was expected that this would cover the one off costs of recruitment and selection, training and supernumerary salaries for four cohorts of 8 recruits (32 in total).
- 062.5 The overall Capital Programme was projected to be underspent by £31,000. The current year's Capital Programme was projected to be underspent by £694,000. Officers reported that there continued to be slippage in the Property General Schemes into 2017/18 although none of the slippage was assessed to have any immediate impact on operational service delivery.
- 062.6 The Authority had maintained Earmarked and General Reserves to assist in managing its spending plans across financial year and making provisions for the financial risks it faced. The provisional year end position was expected to be £21.076m which was £5.180m higher than planned. Officers advised this was due to slippage in the capital programme, delayed contractual milestone payments relating to the IMD Transformation project slipping from 2016/17 into 2017/18 and additional specific grants received from central government which will be spent in 2017/18.
- 062.7 Members expressed concern at slippage in the Capital Programme. The Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer explained that this had been the result of a number of factors: that the Estates team's capacity to deliver day to day capital projects had been heavily impacted by the HQ move from Eastbourne to Lewes; additional issues identified in the design stage of the BA Chambers project had delayed its delivery; there had been delays in the delivery of the SCC Project which had been reported to Members; and further consideration was being given the specification of ancillary vehicles to ensure that they still met the service's needs.
- 062.3 **RESOLVED** – That the following be noted:-
- i) the provisional 2016/17 revenue budget outturn;
 - ii) the provisional 2016.17 capital programme outturn;
 - iii) the use of reserves; and
 - iv) the capital programme slippages.

That the following be approved:

- i) the transfer of the revenue underspend into an earmarked reserve to fund the additional cost of Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment; and
- ii) the transfer of the Mapping Solution and the Community Fire Safety earmarked reserved to the IMD Transformation Reserve.

063. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2017/18**

063.1 The Panel considered a report of the Assistant Director – Resources/Treasurer that reported on issues arising from the monitoring of the 2017/18 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme as at 31 May 2017. (Copy in minute book).

063.2 Members were advised that due to the very early stage in the financial year, the report was on an exception basis and addresses areas where there were clear issues or risks. Initial monitoring forecast an overspend of £137,000 and the report highlighted other risks and issues which were yet to crystallise or areas where the financial impact was not yet known.

The overall Capital Programme was projected to be £214,000 underspent and the current year's Capital Programme was currently £131,000 underspent. There were a number of 2016/17 schemes that had slipped into 2017/18 and these were reflected in the monitoring.

A summary of the savings, £1.864m, already taken from the 2017/18 budget, was set out within the report.

RESOLVED - That the following be noted:-

- i) the risks to and the projected Revenue Budget overspend;
- ii) the risks to and the projected overspend in the Capital Programme;
- iii) the use of reserves;
- iv) the monitoring of savings taken in 2017/18, and
- v) the current year investments.

064. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

064.1 That items numbers 065, 066 and 067 be exempt under paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 and accordingly are not open for public inspection on the grounds that they include information relating to an individual and information relating to the business affairs of the Fire Authority.

The meeting concluded at 11:00 hours.

Signed
Chairman

Dated this day of 2017