

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Strategy and Resources Committee
held in the Oak Room at Headquarters, Shrewsbury
on Thursday, 8 September 2016 at 2.00 pm**

Present

Members

Councillors Mrs Barrow, Carter, Hartin (Vice-Chair), Roberts (Chair), West and Wynn

Officers

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Temporary), Treasurer, Head of Finance, Head of Resources, Planning and Performance Manager, Head of Information and Communications Technology, Workshops Supervisor and Executive Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Turley had given his apologies for absence.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The Chair reminded Members that they must not participate in the discussion of, or voting on, any matter, in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, and that they should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate on that matter.

No Member declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

3 Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 17 March 2016.

It was proposed by Councillor Barrow, seconded by Councillor Carter, and

Resolved that the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting, held on 17 March 2016, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

4 Public Questions

No questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public.

5 Committee Constitution and Training

This report brought the latest version of the Committee's constitution to the notice of its Members. It also asked Members to consider what training, if any, they wish to receive in order for them to fulfil their role on the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Carter, and

Resolved that the Committee

- a) Note the constitution of the Strategy and Resources Committee (attached as an appendix to the report); and
- b) Agree that there are no immediate training needs but that future training was likely to be needed to take into account changes at a national level such as the Home Office and Police and Crime Commissioner

6 Financial Performance to July 2016

This report provided information on the financial performance of the Service, and sought approval for action, where necessary.

The Committee noted the underspends identified to date, as detailed on page 2 of the report, and agreed the virement of these underspends to the revenue budget.

The Head of Finance (HoF) referred to the Service Transformation Programme as detailed on page 2 of the report and informed the Committee of the following further information regarding this and an additional recommendation that needed to be added to the report.

Staff costs for workstreams within the Service Transformation Programme (STP) have been projected to the end of the year, and it is estimated that a further £250,000 will be required in the STP Staff Reserve to fund these posts. Members are asked to agree an additional recommendation to those stated in the report, which is as follows:

- f) Approve the transfer of £250,000 from the underspends detailed on page 2 of the report, to the Reserve to fund staff costs for the Service Transformation Programme

The HoF referred to the advance ICT payment for a 'super bundle' of data, as set out on page 3 of the report, and explained that the upfront outlay of £250,000 will not affect revenue budgets.

Councillors Hartin, Carter and Barrow raised several questions and issues regarding this purchase and Members agreed that they would like a detailed report on this issue to be brought to the October 2016 meeting of the Fire Authority for consideration, before a final decision is made. They also agreed that recommendation c) as set out in the report should therefore be deferred to the Fire Authority.

Members discussed the Authority's investments as detailed on page 4 of the report, focussing in particular on the interest received on these investments and repayment profiles. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for Treasury Management training to be offered to Committee Members in future.

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Barrow, and

Resolved that the Committee agree to recommend that the Fire Authority

- a) Note the position of the revenue budget;
- b) Approve virements to the revenue budget, where requested;
- c) Defer the decision regarding the one-off payment in advance to the October 2016 meeting of the Fire Authority
- d) Note changes to capital schemes and approve cancellation where specified;
- e) Note performance against prudential indicators to date in 2016/17; and
- f) Approve the transfer of £250,000 from the underspends detailed on page 2 of the report, to the reserve to fund staff costs for the Service Transformation Programme.

7 Grant of Exemption to Standing Orders

Clun Architects

In accordance with Section D of the Fire Authority's Standing Orders relating to Contracts, an exemption from the requirement to obtain competitive tenders for architectural services for the Clun Fire Station refurbishment, at an estimated cost of £35,000 has been agreed. The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer, after consultation with the Chair, granted the exemption in April 2016, on the basis that the company concerned, Baart Harries Newall, represents the best option for the Service. Baart Harries Newall have previously worked with the Service on the successful delivery of similar projects.

Internal Audit Services

In accordance with Section D of the Fire Authority's Standing Orders relating to Contracts, an exemption from the requirement to obtain competitive tenders for Internal Audit Services, at an estimated cost of £47,000, has been agreed. The Chief Fire Officer and Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Chair, granted the exemption, on the basis that Audit Services at Shropshire Council represent the best option for the Service.

Internal Audit services, which have been provided by Shropshire Council since the Fire Authority was established, was based on a programme of audits over a four-year period, which ended on 31 March 2016. Discussions around the next audit plan concluded that as the Service is currently undergoing a major transformation in terms of systems and policies, the best approach would be to continue to use Audit Services at Shropshire Council. This would ensure that changes through transformation could be measured and assessed, against reviews previously undertaken by Council auditors.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor West, and

Resolved that the Committee note the exemptions that have been granted.

8 Capital Update on Activity and Finance

This report provided an overview of all of the capital schemes within the Service and their current status. .

The Head of Resources, the Head of ICT and the Workshops Manager gave a detailed overview of the capital schemes as set out in the appendix to the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor West, and

Resolved that the Committee note the progress so far on current schemes

9 Local Government Act 1972

It was proposed by Councillor Carter, seconded by Councillor Hartin, and

Resolved that the Committee being satisfied in all the circumstances of the case that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information, formally resolve that the press and public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

10 Capital Update on Activity and Finance (Paragraph 3)

The Committee received Appendix B to report 8 – Capital Update on Activity and Finance, which was to be considered in closed session, as it contained exempt information.

It was proposed by Councillor Barrow, seconded by Councillor Hartin, and

Resolved that the Committee note exempt Appendix B to report 8
The meeting closed at 3.05 pm.

These minutes were agreed by the Strategy and Resources Committee and signed as a correct record by the:

Chair.....

on

Date.....