



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 17/58

**DRAFT Minutes of the
Policy and Resources Committee meeting
held at 10:00hrs hours on Thursday 19 October 2017 at the
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Salisbury**

These are draft minutes prepared by officers to be approved by the Committee at their next meeting.

Members present: Cllr Mark Anderson; Cllr Brian Dalton; Cllr Matthew Dean; Cllr Beverley Dunlop; Cllr Spencer Flower (Chairman); Cllr Christopher Newbury; Cllr Paul Oatway; Cllr Garry Perkins (Vice Chairman); Cllr Christopher Rochester; Cllr Ann Sibley

Officer attendance: Clerk & Monitoring Officer, Jonathan Mair; CFO Ben Ansell; Director of Finance and Treasurer, Phil Chow; Director of Strategic Projects, ACFO John Aldridge; Director of Operations, ACFO Jim Mahoney; Director of Prevention and Protection, ACFO Mick Stead; Director of People Services, Ms Jenny Long; Area Commander Service Support, Ian Jeary; Democratic Services Officer, Mrs Marianne Taylor

17/11 Welcome

17/11.1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Meeting opened 10.10am

17/12 Apologies

17/12.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Vikki Slade; Cllr Abdul Amin; DCFO, Derek James

17/13 Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest and Notifications of Any Other Business

17/13.1 The Chairman asked the meeting for any disclosures of pecuniary interests under the Localism Act. There were no disclosures.

- 17/14 Minutes of the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 25 January 2017**
- 17/14.1 The Chairman asked Members to review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.
- 17/14.2 **RESOLVED: that the minutes be confirmed without amendment, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**
- 17/15 Financial principles and medium term financial plan**
- 17/15.1 The Chief Fire Officer (CFO), Ben Ansell, introduced a presentation on the financial plan which supported the report Members had received in their meeting pack. The presentation started with the Community Safety Plan and moved to the principles which underpinned the combination of safe, strong and sustainable Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). The presentation went on to discuss the strategic risks for the Service, and the CFO introduced the Members of the strategic leadership team who would be leading on various projects and processes.
- 17/15.2 The Director of Finance and Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow, took Members through the report and its appendix which detailed the significant areas of finance on which important decisions were taken, explained the key finance issues for the Authority, clarified the assumptions made, and provided an update on plans and strategies for medium term financial planning.
- Based on the principles and assumptions the budget for 2018-19 can be balanced without the need for significant use of balances. We have the opportunity for service development, and the ability to address some issues and concerns that could alleviate pressures on future revenue budgets, especially developing and delivering savings through the Communities Programme.
- 17/15.3 Financial sustainability remained a key focus, and as such the establishment of a robust financial outlook and financial position was critical for financial planning and decision making for the Authority.
- 17/15.4 Members discussed the finance principles and cost pressures as highlighted in the presentation and Section 5 of the Appendix to the report. Members raised vehicle procurement and the impact of exchange rate fluctuations on costs. Officers assured Members that procurement practices are regulated and best value is achieved through a transparent procurement process. Members asked about leasing vehicles and equipment as an option. The CFO explained that we have previously extended the life of vehicles and are now looking at alternative solutions e.g. smaller fire engines as part of the overall strategy.
- 17/15.5 The Director of Finance and Treasurer, Mr Phil Chow, in summary explained the Authority is on track to set its budget for 2018-19 based on

current spending assumptions, and predicted future budget requirements, however our future funding beyond 2019/20 is less certain in terms of the move to the Home Office, Government's fiscal policy and the Fair Funding and Business Rates Retention reviews.

- 17/15.6 Members discussed some wording in the report and its appendix, adding that they would like to see less emotive language in relation to 'austerity' and Government policy and strategy. This was delegated to the Chairman and Officers, along with a suggested form of words (not 'austerity', but fiscal responsibility).
- 17/15.7 **RESOLVED: Having noted the Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP), Members approved the principles in the MTFP, subject to wording changes delegated to the Chairman as identified at 17/15.6 above.**
- 17/15.8 **ACTION: The strategy on the future provision of alternative emergency service vehicles to be brought to the attention of the Authority as part of the Communities Programme update.**
- 17/15.9 **ACTION: Officers to replace the wording 'austerity' with 'fiscal responsibility' or similar wording in the MTFP and refer to the Chairman for final approval.**
- 17/15.10 **Note:** Cllr Stribley gave her apologies for the Policy and Resources meeting due to take place on 11 January, 2018.
- 17/16 Date of Next Meeting**
- 17/16.1 The chairman confirmed with members the date of the next meeting as 11 January 2018 at the DWFRS HQ, Salisbury.

Meeting closed at 11am

Signed: _____