

AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 14 January, 2011.

PRESENT:

Councillors : I. F. E Beagley (Chairman); C. Carter; J. Moulton; F. Pearce; R.H. Price; D. Simpson; R. Smith; A. Weeks.

48 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. S. Carew and F. Jonas.

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed that they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally, at the time of the debate, declare their interest and having regard to the circumstances described in Paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code.

There were no declarations of interest made by Members under this item.

50 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October, 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matter arising:

Disposal of Copnor Fire Station

On Minute 47, the Chief Officer updated Members on the present position.

51 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations to the meeting.

52 BUDGET MONITORING : NOVEMBER, 2010

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer and Chief Officer (Item 5 in the Minute Book) setting out the latest analysis of expenditure forecasts. It included savings of £675,000 for the most recent quarter, plus savings identified previously giving a total underspend of £974,000 for 2010/11. The Treasurer highlighted the main issues and key balances as identified in the report. Members welcomed the savings, together with the balance in the improvement and sustainability reserve which would help to ease the pressure on the current and future years' budgets.

RESOLVED:

That the latest financial position for 2010/11 be accepted.

53 **UPDATED DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12**

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer and Chief Officer (Item 6 in the Minute Book) on the updated draft budget 2011/12.

By way of introduction, the Committee received a shortened version of the presentation made by the Chief Officer on this item to the statutory budget consultation meetings held on 13 January, 2011. A brief summary of the questions and issues raised on 13 January was tabled at the meeting (Item 6(a) in the Minute Book).

The Treasurer presented the main report along with a supplementary report by the Treasurer (Item 6(b) in the Minute Book) which was tabled at the meeting. This included the first taxbase and updated collection fund balance estimates which had been received since the draft budget report had been despatched. The Treasurer then introduced the Treasury Management Strategy which had been e-mailed to Members earlier in the week (and was circulated at the meeting) (Appendix 8 to the budget report). This Strategy has been thoroughly reviewed in the light of the appointment of treasury management advisers, Arlingclose and provided for the first time for a potentially significant level of reserves available for investment. It made mention of a proposal to take a more active approach to managing the Authority's portfolio of existing borrowing and looking for opportunities for potential investment.

After a full discussion which included clarification on a number of points and issues, Members supported the proposed approach by the Treasurer and Chief Officer and asked that the proposed updated draft budget report for the Authority on 9 February 2011 include figures which showed the effects of a 0 to 2.5% council tax increase for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 and a 12½% reduction in government grant for 2013/14 and 2014/15. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

That it be a **RECOMMENDATION** to the Authority:

- (a) That the budget for 2011/12 be set at a level which does not require any increase in council tax.
- (b) That the proposals set out in the updated draft budget 2011/12 report, Treasury Management Strategy and supplementary report circulated at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 14 January, 2011 be approved for the Treasurer and Chief Officer to prepare for the Authority on 9 February, 2011 the:
 - revenue budget for 2011/12
 - capital programme for 2011/12
 - Treasury Management Strategy and associated prudential indicators
 - Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision
 - total budget requirement

- Authority's council tax of £61.38 and to the proportional equivalent for each property band
- Precepts made on each of the billing authorities based on their tax base.

54 **REDUCING THE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 7 in the Minute Book) on the progress being made on improving environmental performance and preparing the Service for the impacts of climate change. In supporting the ethos and actions mentioned in the report, the Committee asked the Chief Officer to prepare for their next meeting a report on the "Hampshire-wide Climate Change and Vision Strategy Partnership" which was due to be launched in April, 2011. Of particular interest to Members was the Partnership's proposed priority with regard to installing "Solar PV" (electricity generation) and "Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings". The Committee also asked to receive a report at some time in the future should ISO accreditation be achieved in relation to the "Service-wide Environment Management System." Councillor A. Weeks volunteered at the meeting to be lead member to help promote carbon reduction activities. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be a RECOMMENDATION to the Authority that the corporate objective and target for introducing an Environmental Management System be amended as follows:

"As part of a regional partnership we will introduce a service-wide Environmental Management System in 2011 and work towards gaining independent accreditation of the system (ISO 14001) by the end of 2012".
- (b) That when setting budgets for buildings maintenance, the Committee is mindful of the need to ensure sufficient funding to rectify any potential areas of non-compliance that could be revealed during the implementation of the Environmental Management System.
- (c) That when setting medium-term financial strategies, the Committee is mindful of the strong financial drivers for investing in the energy and water efficiency of service buildings to gain longer-term benefits.
- (d) That the Authority complies to join the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme to benefit from the Programme's range of support services and the structure it provides for all its carbon management activities.
- (e) That the proposal to establish a network of "Environmental Champions" across the Service be endorsed and that the Committee appoint Councillor A. Weeks as lead member to help promote carbon reduction activities.