

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 3 February 2016.

PRESENT:

Councillors:

p	John Bennison	p	Geoff Hockley
p	Graham Burgess (Vice Chairman)	p	Sharon Mintoff
p	Chris Carter	p	Roger Price
p	Roz Chadd	p	David Simpson
p	David Fuller	p	Luke Stubbs (Chairman)

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recordings for broadcasting purposes.

**124 APOLOGIES**

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

**125 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

There were no declarations of interest received for the meeting.

**126 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes from the meeting on the 4 November 2015 were agreed to be correct and signed by the Chairman.

**127 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

**128 DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations received for the meeting.

## 129 ADOPTION OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES' NAMES AND LOGOS

The Committee received a report from the Chief Officer regarding guidance on the use of Fire and Rescue Authorities names and logos (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced and it was noted that the guidance issued by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) on the use of names and logos would not constitute a change of policy for HFRA.

With regards to the recommendations, Members discussed the merits of including the option for the Chief Officer to consult with the Chairman of the Authority should a decision be required in the future, to facilitate greater flexibility. An amendment to the recommendation to this effect was proposed and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Finance and General Purposes Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Full Authority that:

- i. The Authority agrees to comply with the Chief Fire Officers Association guidance on the use of Fire and Rescue Authorities names and logos.
- ii. Authority is delegated to the Chief Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority and/or Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to determine any decision regarding the use of the Authority's name and/or logo by a third party in accordance with the guidance.
- iii. No charge will be made for the minimum use by 3SFire of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority's name to meet legal disclosure requirements.

## 130 REVIEW OF CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

The Committee received a report from the Chief Officer (Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding revisions to the current contract standing orders.

It was confirmed that factors including changes to public procurement requirements, a need for standardisation with partners and to ensure efficiency to systems were the primary drivers behind the review of Contract Standing Orders and subsequent proposals. Members considered a number of key points, including the de minimus threshold and were supportive of the proposals.

RESOLVED:

That the Finance and General Purposes Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Full Authority that:

- a) The revised Contract Standing Orders set out as Appendix 2 to the

report are approved.

- b) Authority be delegated to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to amend the terms of reference of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to reflect the Committee's role outlined in paragraph 12.4 and 13.1 of the revised Contract Standing Orders.
- c) In the event of a conflict between the revised Contract Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation and/or Financial Regulations, then the Scheme of Delegation and/or Financial Regulation must be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the revised Contract Standing Orders.

### **131 REVISED 2015/16 BUDGET AND DRAFT BUDGET 2016/17**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Officer regarding the 2015/16 budget, and budget setting for 2016/17 (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The budgetary position of the Fire Authority in light of recent Government Grant Settlement announcements was set out. Members heard that the position for Fire Authorities was more favourable than for other areas of Local Government, however savings targets would still need to be met. The relationship between the proposed budget and the ongoing Risk Review was clarified.

Members questioned the potential value of agreeing to a four year plan being offered by Government. It was explained that the conditions of this proposal were still being established through national negotiations and it was agreed that the Chief Financial Officer would present further details to the Full Authority meeting in February.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

- i. Note the latest 2015/16 budget position (Appendix A) and the changes to the capital programme (Appendix D)
- ii. Approve the transfer of £1.493m to the Service Improvement Plan.
- iii. Approve the virements over £100,000 as set out in section 2 of Appendix A.
- iv. Approve additional capital expenditure of £1.15m on Frontline Appliance Major Repairs, Breathing Apparatus Telemetry, Thermal Imaging Cameras and Station End Equipment as set out in Appendix D.
- v. Support the proposed efficiencies programme (Appendix B)
- vi. Support the proposed use of reserves (Appendix C)
- vii. Adopt the principles for managing the budget over the short term as outlined in section 4 of this report.
- viii. Delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer to make amendments to the final budget to be presented to the Authority to take account of late changes in the figures, in particular those notified by Government and Local Councils.

That the Finance and General Purposes Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Full Authority that:

- ix. Council tax is increased by 1.99% (equivalent to £1.22 for average Band D households) for 2016/17.
- x. The draft budget for 2016/17 (summarised at Appendix F) be approved.
- xi. The updates to the capital programme and the proposed financing of it (Appendix G & H) are approved.
- xii. The Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix I) is approved.

### **132 TEMPORARY PROMOTIONS – PENSION DECISION**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Financial Officer (Item 9 in the Minute Book) regarding the pension position of temporary promotions.

The background to the issue of an increased pension burden on some individuals in relation to temporary promotions was set out and it was explained that although legislation had been put in place in 2013 to mitigate, the necessary decision had not been taken by the Fire Authority at the time. It was confirmed that taking a retrospective decision to correct the position by making acting-up payments pensionable would enable corrections to be made to firefighters' pensions.

Members questioned why this had been overlooked and the estimated cost of corrective action. It was explained that Hampshire was not alone in this regard and that the recently created Pension Board would help to avoid similar omissions in the future. The corrective action would be made within existing capacity and therefore with no additional cost. It was furthermore explained that further changes to the Pension Scheme meant the issue was no longer applicable, although complexities remained.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Finance and General Purposes Committee agrees that for HFRA, temporary promotions will be pensionable, where permitted by the rule of the scheme.
- ii. In order to minimise the pension impact on individuals in temporary promotions since 1 July 2013, the Committee agrees that any temporary promotions that existed on or have been granted since 1 July 2013 will be treated as pensionable Additional Pension Benefits.
- iii. Authority is given to the Chief Financial Officer to take the steps set out at section 5 below to correct the position in respect of temporary promotions since 1 July 2013.
- iv. Based on advice from the Head of Legal and the Chief Financial Officer that this error be reported formally to The Pension Regulator together with details of the action that will be taken to correct the position.

### **133 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That in relation to the following items the public be excluded from the meeting, 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 were present during the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

#### **134 AN UPDATE ON THE AUTHORITY'S RISK PROTECTION AND INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received an exempt report from the Chief Officer (Item 11 in the Minute Book) regarding the Authority's risk protection and insurance arrangements.

Members heard the background to the proposals, agreeing that they were the right way forward for the Authority.

Resolved:

That the Finance and General Purposes Committee supports the risk protection pool and insurance arrangements that have been put in place.

#### **135 FIREFIGHTER PENSION ISSUE**

The Committee received an exempt report from the Chief Financial Officer (Item 12 in the Minute Book) regarding a firefighter pension issue.

The circumstances of the situation, as set out in the exempt report were considered and it was confirmed that as scheme manager the F&GP Committee had authority to agree a resolution.

Resolved:

Having considered the risks set out in section 6, the Finance and General Purposes Committee gave authority to the Chief Financial Officer to undertake the necessary actions to reinstate the pension position of the named firefighter set out in the report.

#### **136 EXEMPT MINUTE**

The committee confirmed the Exempt Minute from the 4 November 2015 meeting and the Chairman signed it as a correct record.