

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, 2010.

PRESENT:

Councillors : I. F. E Beagley (Chairman); C. Carter; L. Fairhurst; R. Smith.

15 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Carew; A. Evans; F. Pearce; R. Price and A. Weeks.

16 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.

17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October, 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations to the meeting.

19 BUDGET MONITORING : 3RD QUARTER 2009/10

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer and Chief Officer (Item 5 in the Minute Book) setting out the latest budget position of the Authority. It was noted that the total projected underspend for 2009/10 was £938,000 (equivalent to 1.4% of the budget). Members supported carrying forward £198,000 of this sum to fund three ICT developments and the other proposed changes to reserves which included increasing the general reserve balance to £2m.

RESOLVED:

That the latest financial position for 2009/10 be noted, and that the proposed treatment of the projected underspend and changes to reserves be approved.

20 UPDATED DRAFT BUDGET 2010/11

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer and Chief Officer (Item 6

in the Minute Book) on the updated draft budget 2010/11. It aimed to strike a difficult balance between maintaining a low Council tax level for 2010/11 and the need to prepare the Authority for more difficult times ahead.

The Treasurer informed the Committee that since the report had been prepared, indicative changes to the existing taxbase had been notified which would result in an estimated additional £250,000 being available for the Authority from 2010/11.

The Committee received a shortened version of the presentation made by the Treasurer and Chief Officer on this item to the statutory budget consultation meetings held on 13 January, 2010. 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 Committee discussed their preferred level of budget/Council tax increase in 2010/11. After careful consideration, Members agreed to recommend to the Authority, a 1.8% Council tax increase in 2010/11.

RESOLVED:

That it be a RECOMMENDATION to the Authority :

- (a) That the budget for 2010/11 be set as close as possible to a level which requires a Council tax increase of 1.8%.
- (b) That approval be given to the capital programme and associated prudential indicators set out in Appendices 5 and 10 of the report.
- (c) That approval be given to the Treasury Management Strategy and the recommendations contained within it as set out in Appendix 9 of the report.
- (d) That approval be given to the policy on Minimum Reserve Provision as set out in Section 26 of the report.

21 **REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk (Item 7 in the Minutes Book) on an invitation for each Committee to review their terms of reference. Responses would be reported back to the Governance Committee in March 2010, and recommendations about the future governance structure then proposed for adoption by the Authority at its Annual Meeting in June, 2010.

Members agreed that the business of its meetings tended to focus on the "financial" aspects of its terms of reference at the possible detriment to the "general purposes" part of the Committee's remit. As a result, they felt it was appropriate for other areas of business to be the subject of the Committee's attention on a more regular basis as referred to in the report. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the Finance and General Purposes Committee supports the following other areas of business being the subject of the Committees' attention on a more regular basis and a change to the wording of its terms of reference regarding the approval of accounts:-
- Oversight of the fifth priority in the Service Plan 2009-12, which concerns the Management of resources in a way that achieves efficiency savings of £1.5m per year.
 - Oversight of the fourth priority in the Service Plan concerning environmental management and reduction of carbon footprint.
 - To avoid conflict with the terms of reference of the Governance Committee to amend this Committee's existing terms of reference in relation to approving the accounts to read instead 'To receive, consider and approve budget monitoring reports and a year-end report on the outturn position as set out in the Authority's final accounts and to make recommendations to the Authority on any proposals to change the budget.
- (b) That the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee present the Committee's comments on this item at the Governance Committee in March 2010.

22 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**RESOLVED:**

That, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is 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 that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 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.

23 WINCHESTER FIRE STATION : TENDER EVALUATION AND AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR NEW BUILDING

The Committee considered and approved the exempt report of the Chief Officer which was circulated to Members at the meeting (Item 8 in the Minute Book) on this matter.

[SUMMARY OF EXEMPT MINUTE]