

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 18 May 2016**

Present:

Members of the Committee

Councillors John Appleton, Nicola Davies, Neil Dirveiks, Peter Fowler,
Brian Hawkes, Keith Kondakor, Phillip Morris-Jones (Chair for this meeting) Chris Saint,

Other County Councillors

John Horner, Portfolio Holder – Community Safety
Philip Johnson

Officers

David Ayton-Hill, Economy & Skills Group Manager
Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer
David Carter, Strategic Director, Resources Group
Andrew Lovegrove, Head of Corporate Financial Services
Rob Moyney, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Paul Williams, Democratic Services Team Leader

1. General

Before the meeting started, members wished it noted that their very best wishes be sent to Councillor Western.

Members also welcomed Councillor Brian Hawkes who has replaced Councillor John Holland on the Resources and Fire & Rescue OSC following the full Council meeting held on the 17 May 2016.

(1) Apologies

Councillor Bernard Kirton and Councillor Matt Western

(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Councillor Chris Saint declared a non-pecuniary interest regarding Item 6 on the agenda. This was due to his involvement with the LEP.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2016

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2016 be signed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Item 6 – WCC Project and Programme Management Update; members of the Committee requested that an update be provided before the next meeting (13 July 2016) regarding the Member Dashboard.

Item 7 – Infrastructure Funding; Councillor Keith Kondakor commented that the information which was provided to members in the form of a Briefing Note (regarding Section 106 funding agreements in District and Borough Councils), should be made available to the public; as the original report had been. It was agreed that this would be taken up with Janet Neale.

The Chair also requested further information regarding the spending of Section 106 monies in areas outside the development area; i.e. neighbouring counties. It was agreed that this would be provided.

Item 8 – Update on the MASH in Warwickshire; members of the Committee requested that an update be provided on the performance management tool and whether it could be married up to the new IT System.

Item 9 – Urgent Matters; following the email received from Anthony Morgan raising concerns on the specific proposal by Warwickshire County Council to build its own training centre, Councillor John Horner confirmed to the Committee that the issue had been discussed at the latest Cabinet meeting. Councillor Horner agreed to check if a response had been sent to Tony Morgan.

Item 9 – Urgent Matters; regarding the issue of sprinkler systems being fitted in all new build, domestic properties; Councillor John Horner stated that this issue was being considered by the Chief Fire Officers Association.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions received or presented at the meeting.

3. Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders

Councillor John Appleton raised concerns regarding the Pupil Premium application process and the problems apparently created by IT obstacles. It was noted that parents' failure to register for the Pupil Premium has a direct impact on the funding available for schools. Councillor Chris Saint assured members that work is ongoing to align the IT Systems adding that this included some work with authorities outside of Warwickshire.

4. Work Programme 2016/17

It was confirmed that the presentation on the transformation of the Fire Service over the last 2/3 years will be given at the next meeting; 13 July 2016. This is to be combined with the fire peer review report which is also scheduled for the meeting in July.

Members requested that an item on Business Rate Information is added to the Work Programme.

Members also requested information regarding employment rates across Warwickshire.

Resolved

The Resources and Fire and Rescue Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Agrees the updated 2016/17 Work Programme**
- 2) Notes the scheduled future meeting dates.**

5. Treasury Management Quarterly Monitoring Report to December 2015

Andrew Lovegrove, Head of Corporate Financial Services, presented the report to the Committee. It was clarified to members that Table 1 on page 2 of the report should read “property fund” (rather than just “property”).

Members questioned whether investment in property was appropriate, asking whether the money invested could be drawn down at short notice. Andrew Lovegrove confirmed that the investment funds used by the Council have 1 week’s access; if required.

Following a question regarding how the performance of Warwickshire County Council compares to other authorities, Andrew Lovegrove confirmed that analysis could be provided as part of the next Treasury Management Report, which is due to be presented to the Committee in September 2016.

Councillor Nicola Davies sought clarification of the impact from any potential changes to the investment strategy should the United Kingdom leave the European Union (EU) following the referendum in June 2016. Andrew Lovegrove confirmed that the strategy is set by the Council and it was not anticipated that this would change following an exit from the EU.

Resolved

The Resources and Fire and Rescue Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes performance on Treasury Management in respect of 2015/16 up to December 2015.

6. Update on Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) funding opportunities

David Ayton-Hill, Economy & Skills Group Manager presented an overview of the report to the Committee; confirming that LEPs do not have any funding of their own to support investments; but are vehicles to access Central Government Funds.

It was confirmed to members that the current Local Growth Fund will run until 2020/21 and that as a result Warwickshire County Council has created pipeline projects as part of the Warwickshire Growth Plan, all with the aim of helping economic growth in local areas and which helps identify schemes for the Growth Fund (and/or other funding streams as appropriate). Members were referred to the list of current projects currently being considered in Table 2 at the end of the report. Members noted that the projects showed none of the costs that would be involved; or how any decisions on which projects had been put forward for consideration had been reached by officers, with no member input. It was noted that members felt it

unclear at which point during the process their input would be best received. It was felt that the process lacks transparency.

With regards to the Combined Local Authority, it was confirmed to members that there were currently 3 LEPs across the combined authority area. There would be a Super Strategic Economic Plan in place but this should not affect the current LEP projects across Coventry and Warwickshire.

Councillor Chris Saint confirmed that as a member of the LEP Board he would be raising questions at the next meeting regarding how much input Councils are able to give when deciding which projects are given the go-ahead. Members agreed that they should be given some input into the decision making process and be able to scrutinise decisions made. Members concluded that information was needed on how elected members could assist in preparing material for presentation to the LEP Board.

Members noted that the projects that were progressing appeared to be almost exclusively infrastructure based; and this did not clearly relate to the 10 programme areas presented in the report (5 thematic and 5 geographical). David Ayton-Hill clarified that the Local Growth Fund was only for capital schemes, and the majority of funding was from the Department for Transport, hence the focus on infrastructure schemes. Furthermore, the 10 programme areas reflect the wider Growth Plan, which identifies a range of pipeline projects which then need to be matched to the most appropriate funding stream. Members noted that projects need to be scrutinised before they are approved. Councillor Neil Dirveiks suggested that Adrian Hart, Team Leader - Transport Planning, be invited to give a presentation to the Committee regarding the projects from Table 2 – allowing members to gain an understanding of how each one was prioritised.

Following information from David Ayton-Hill regarding the timescales for the final decisions on each project, Councillor Kondakor requested that an update be provided to members of the Committee, in the form of a summary, at the next meeting in July 2016. It was noted that final decisions are due to be made by the end of May 2016.

Members concluded by noting that all elected members would be interested in receiving much more information regarding LEP projects and in particular, local members who have proposed projects in their areas. Communication from the LEP must improve.

Resolved

The Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- a) **Notes the contents of this report**
- b) **Requests that further information be brought to the Committee setting out progress with the Local Growth Fund Expressions of Interest.**

7. The Impact on the Fire and Rescue Service of it coming under the Home Office and Proposals for Fire and Rescue to come under the Strategic Control of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Rob Moyney, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report to members and highlighted the main points.

- 1) The Bill regarding the proposal for emergency services to collaborate and for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to take over the running of the Fire and Rescue Service if a local case is made, or for a PCC to join a Fire Authority, will be implemented by April 2017.
- 2) There is no clear indication from the Home Office, at this point in time, on the management of the Fire Service; but there is a meeting planned for next week, regarding the move to the Home Office.

It was noted by members that the “Governance” and “Single Employer” models must consult with local people before an Order can be made and that this could be a difficult task. Rob Moyney confirmed that the PCC will initiate any consultation..

Rob Moyney was also able to confirm that governance of the Fire Service would continue to be separate to the governance of the Ambulance Service; however collaborative work would still continue; for example, the shared responsibility for cardiac arrest training.

It was also confirmed that there would be a change to the statutory requirement with regards to a duty on flooding; however this would not change what is currently done across the County.

Assurances were given to members that the budget would continue to allow the Fire Service to use boats, when appropriate, to intervene when there is a risk to life.

Councillor John Horner informed members of the three columns for the setting up of the PCC, as described by Teresa May.

- 1) Accountability
- 2) Capability
- 3) Empowerment

The PCC was directly elected by the people in Warwickshire so will have to have more political accountability. The Fire Service supported the development of the business case created by the PCC following consultation and the results of the consultation are available on the www.gov.uk website. Councillor Horner confirmed that there would be more consultation before any final agreement could be made.

It was also noted by members that a briefing note will be provided after the Home Secretary’s speech which is due next week.

Resolved

The Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

8. Urgent Matters

Councillor Peter Fowler requested that the Fatal Four Road Safety Presentation is shown to the Committee. It was agreed that this could be added to the other Fire Service Items on the agenda.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee was confirmed as 13 July 2016 at 2 p.m. in CR2, Shire Hall.

The meeting rose at 15:59 pm.

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Chair