

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 15 September 2016**

Present:

Members of the Committee

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

Other County Councillors

Alan Cockburn - Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property
John Horner - Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
Kam Kaur - Portfolio Holder for Customers

Officers

Elizabeth Abbott, Business Partner, Planning, Performance & Improvement
Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer
David Carter, Strategic Director, Resources Group
Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer
Tricia Morrison, Head of Performance
Rob Moyney, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Dave Pemberton, Area Commander (Fire and Rescue)
Steve Smith, Head of Physical Assets

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor John Appleton and Councillor Matt Western.

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

None

(3) Minutes of the meetings held on 13 July 2016

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meetings held on 13 July 2016 be signed as a correct record.

It was noted that the Fatal Four Road Safety Presentation will be shown at the full Council meeting on the 22 September 2016 (Item 4 page 2).

Matters Arising

None

2. Public Question Time

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

3. Questions to Cabinet Portfolio Holders

There were no questions presented to Cabinet Portfolio Holders at the meeting.

4. Work Programme 2016/17

With regards to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), members confirmed that they had received a briefing note with a 6 month update. Members requested a follow-up briefing note be circulated after a full update report is presented to the Adult Social Care & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee that is due at the end of the year.

The committee requested that a report on interest rates be brought to a future meeting. This was agreed. The report will look at the potential impact of Brexit, property values and other factors not previously predicted.

Members agreed that a report be presented at the December 2016 meeting on Business Rates. This should include a review of the Government response to the results of the latest consultation. It was noted by members that those who pay business rate should be involved in any review carried out by the Committee.

Briefing notes following each of the key milestones of the business rates process will also be presented at following meetings.

Resolved

The Committee:

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

5. One Organisational Plan Year End Progress Report: April 2015-March 2016

Members raised the following points of clarification –

Page four of the report - with regard to the Customer Journey business measures, it was confirmed that there is a fully resourced staff in place and that the service is starting to show improvement in the current quarter.

Page six of the report - it was confirmed that the figures in row three show the savings made (in pounds). Steve Smith confirmed that several projects had contributed to the savings made and that the figures in the report were accurate. Members requested the details of the savings made be presented in the form of a briefing note at the next Committee meeting. David Carter clarified that Information Assets had achieved a saving of £290,000 which was £100,000 below its target.

Page six of the report – Members noted that the figures for staff engagement had fallen from the previous year. David Carter confirmed that the key findings from the latest staff survey were now available and would be presented to the members at the next OSC meeting in December 2016.

Page seven of the report – Rob Moyney informed members that the whole time vacancies showing in the report had been filled by temporary contract workers while a recruitment process takes place. This is due to be completed during 2017/18.

It was also confirmed that while cross-border support was successful there would be further training given to fire officers about location knowledge following a recent incident where the wrong entrance was used to access a fire in a rural area.

Members noted the rise in deliberate fires and requested a further breakdown of the information to allow a comparison to be made with the figures from last year. Rob Moyney confirmed that there had been a national increase in deliberate fires during the year and it was especially challenging during warm school holidays.

Page twelve of the report (point 4.5) – The committee was informed that the VAT refund received had been a one off and would not be a regular occurrence. The refund related to a Social Care Transaction.

Page fifteen of the report – it was noted the reported underspend had been planned, thus allowing for funds to remain in reserves. Members requested that a briefing note be provided highlighting any trends and presenting information around the underspend.

Resolved

The Committee notes the key messages set out in the report and requests that further reports and briefing notes be prepared as set out in the minutes.

6. One Organisational Plan Quarter 1 Progress Report: April-June 2016

Members felt that presenting a comparison element to the quarterly reports would be beneficial, and that keeping the layout the same in each report would allow members to identify any issues. Tricia Morrison stated that comparison would be clear to members in the Quarter Two report.

Page six of the report – Members commented that there was no information to explain the two amber ratings and that it would be useful to know what the previous rating was (red or green). Tricia Morrison agreed that future reports would address the previous ratings where there had been a change.

It was confirmed to members that the figures relating to staff sickness were days (rather than hours).

Page eight of the report – with regard to the capital slippage, Steve Smith reassured members that the on-site issues at the fire training centre had been resolved. There had been some environmental anomalies. It was confirmed that there was no financial risk to the Council.

Page nine of the report – Members requested further information regarding the performance information for second firefighting appliances reaching an incident. Rob Moyney confirmed that rural isolation is an issue but that officers and equipment are moved around the County on a day-to-day basis to reduce this.

There is also increased training for officers and incident commanders. Members felt it important to understand where the service is failing to reach the target for second appliances attending an incident and requested that a breakdown of such incidents is provided. It was agreed that this would be done.

It was confirmed to members that the performance information for fire related injuries was for those sustained by members of the public only and did not include firefighters.

Councillor Peter Fowler commended the work done by the Fire and Rescue Service around the range of vehicles they have in their fleet, of all shapes and sizes, which allows the most appropriate vehicle to go to an incident.

It was confirmed that the Fire Service was also looking at introducing bikes to their fleet. An internal film has been created to showcase the range of small to large vehicles. Members requested that this be circulated to all Members of the Council.

Members were also encouraged by the work done in order to encourage British companies to tender for fire vehicle contracts, including giving companies feedback after they had failed to win a contract. There is also a technical support team working as part of a national procurement team aiming to achieve an economy of scale in securing contracts across the country.

Resolved

The Committee notes the quarterly OOP performance progress report.

7. Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2015-16

Mathew Dawson presented the report to members which included information regarding investing and borrowing.

Details were provided about Money Market Funds where money can be taken out or put in quickly if needed. Other external funds also made up the total invested by the County Council. In house deposits have reduced over the year. They are considered to be long term investments without the easy access of Money Market Funds.

With regard to interest rates, Members were informed that another interest rate cut would not have a significant impact on the Council's funds as a result of strong investments.

In the light of information presented in table three of the report, Members requested information on expected interest earned against actual interest earned. Concern was raised around the potential pressure on reserves if the targets were not met. As a point of reference it was noted that 1% was equal to approximately £1million.

Members were encouraged by the information that the return on Council investments was slightly higher than similar authorities.

Resolved

The Committee notes the report.

8. Verbal Update on the Warwickshire Forum

Steve Smith provided a brief update regarding the Public Property Asset Register. The Council has been working with Public Sector partners with the aim of publishing combined property data. This will be as part of the Government's transparency

agenda. All the data that has currently been collected will be published, via Warwickshire County Council's database, in the coming weeks.

The Council already has shared software with the District and Borough Councils and work has started to include the police and health bodies.

December 2016 will see a bid put in by Warwickshire County Council for One Public Estate; links to this information will be provided to members as well as being available in the public domain.

9. Urgent Matters

None

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee was confirmed as 14 December 2016 at 2 p.m. in CR2, Shire Hall.

The meeting rose at 15.25 pm.

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Chair