

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 5 July 2017**

Present:

Members of the Committee

Councillors Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair), John Cooke, Andy Crump, Pete Gilbert, Andy Jenns, Maggie O'Rourke, Bill Olnier, Kate Rolfe and Heather Timms (Chair)

Other County Councillor

Howard Roberts - Portfolio Holder for Fire & Community Safety

Officers

Helen Barnsley -	Democratic Services Officer
John Betts -	Head of Finance
Mathew Dawson -	Treasury and Pensions Group Manager
Sarah Duxbury -	Head of Law and Governance & Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Andy Hickmott -	Chief Fire Officer
Rob Moyney -	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Janet Purcell -	Democratic Services Manager
Steve Smith -	Head of Property Services
Sushma Soni –	Performance & Improvement Officer

1. General

(1) Apologies

Councillor Sarah Boad (Replaced by Councillor Kate Rolfe) and Councillor Judy Falp.

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

None

(3) Minutes of the meetings held on 22 February 2017 and 23 May 2017

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 February 2017 and 23 May 2017 be signed as correct.

Matters Arising

i. Minute 4

Members noted that a briefing note had been requested regarding the financial impact of the West Midlands Combined Authority on the County Council. It was confirmed that this had been produced and sent out to all members on 27 June 2017.

The Committee was advised that the former cross party fire working group no longer existed and that it was for the Committee to decide what specific aspects of the Fire and Rescue Service it wished to scrutinise and how it would undertake this as part of its planning of its work programme.

ii. Minute 5

It was agreed that members be provided with an update on the work to make the budget data collection more efficient and in turn, the monitoring reports more timely.

Borders to Coast Pensions Partnership

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke asked what savings were expected from the pooling of local pension funds. It was agreed that the report agreed by Council on this subject be circulated to members, along with an estimate of the anticipated savings.

2. Public Question Time

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

3. Questions to the Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Fire and Rescue Service Budget

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke, Labour Group Spokesperson for Fire & Rescue Service, asked Councillor Howard Roberts, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Fire and Community Safety, for clarification regarding the working budget for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Portfolio Holder undertook to obtain clarification on the breakdown of the budget and gave his assurance that the priority of the Fire and Rescue Service was always to provide an effective service for Warwickshire residents.

Councillor O'Rourke expressed concern to the Portfolio Holder regarding the retention of firefighters and resources generally across the service. Councillor Roberts replied that resources were under constant review.

4. Review of the Committee's Work and Development of the Future Work Programme

Janet Purcell, Democratic Services Manager, outlined the role of overview and scrutiny, the methods open to members for undertaking scrutiny reviews and the role of Democratic Services in supporting the Committee. The report before members also set out the work undertaken by the Committee over the past two years and set out the factors to consider in agreeing its work programme going forward. In particular members were encouraged to have a core work programme focused on a few key areas that reflect the Council's priorities rather than have too many items as this would be more likely to result in effective in-depth scrutiny reviews.

The Committee identified the following topics for possible inclusion in the work programme:

- Procurement – how this operates within local area
- Methods being undertaken to ensure value for money from support services
- Warwickshire Fire and Rescue - IRMP& Action Plan
- Peer Review –Action Plan
- CWLEP Funding
- Digital First
- Access to Funding – how effective is the Council at accessing funding and in generating income.
- Business Rates –update when appropriate

The Chair confirmed that a meeting of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Group Spokespersons would meet before the next committee meeting in September, to consider the suggestions put forward.

Resolved

- (1) That the Committee notes the work of the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 2015 to 2017, as outlined in Appendix A of the report;
- (2) That the areas proposed for inclusion in the work programme be considered by the Chair and Group Spokespersons meeting.

(Note: This has now been arranged for Friday 21 July 2017)

5. Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-2020 and Action Plan 2017-18

Rob Moyney, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report to the Committee and gave an explanation regarding the process the IRMP had been through so far. The IRMP will be presented to Cabinet on the 13 July 2017 and then full Council on the 18 July 2017.

Rob Moyney explained that the IRMP is a three year plan supported by an annual action plan which has 11 key actions six are classed as high level actions and five are operational actions. One action highlighted to members was the purchase of new cutting equipment for use on new, modern cars which were stronger and required a different type of equipment.

Members commended officers for both the content of the IRMP and for its accessibility. Councillor Maggie O'Rourke highlighted the collaborative work and particularly welcomed work with the West Midlands Ambulance Service. The Chair agreed to write to the NHS partners welcoming the collaborative work. The Members welcomed further information on current areas of collaboration.

Andy Hickmott, Chief Fire Officer, advised members that fire authorities do have a duty to collaborate. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service has a history of collaborating with neighbouring services and collaboration was always a first consideration in all they do.

Following a question regarding the use of aerial rescue platforms, Andy Hickmott, explained that there is one aerial appliance known a Combined Aerial Rescue Platform which combines a traditional fire engine with an enhanced aerial rescue capability. There are also Aerial Appliances located in surrounding counties and we have arrangements to request these if they are located nearest to an incident.

The Chair asked for an update for members on the Grenfell Tower fire and any implications for Warwickshire. Andy Hickmott outlined the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Service and of the District and Borough Councils and of the different legislation that applies to planning and building control, housing (including communal areas), public buildings and commercial buildings.

The Committee was advised that there would be a briefing for all members and updates as more is understood about the Grenfell Tower fire.

Resolved

That the Committee support the Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan 2017-2020 and Action Plan 2017-18.

6. Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge 2016

Rob Moyney outlined the key findings of the Peer Challenge which had taken place over four days in November 2016; following a self-assessment submitted by the Fire Service.

The Peer Review contained four stages – a self-assessment, a formal visit, some immediate feedback and a formal report. It was completed

by Fire Officers from around the country as well as members of the LGA. It was noted that a draft version of the action plan had been submitted to the Committee during the previous administration.

Members welcomed the report which they considered a positive report from outside the organisation. There were some areas for improvement highlighted in the report which included the planning process in particular the review of the previous changes to the fire service and the use of Active Incident Monitoring (AIM) which is used for organisational learning

With regard to the identified areas for improvement included in the report, members requested further information relating to the cost implications. It was agreed that progress on the actions come back to the Committee and this would include any resource implications.

The Chair emphasised that the Fire Service is an established part of the committee and that the members should take ownership of the action plans (Peer Review and IRMP). The Chair also took the opportunity to thank the Fire Officers present at the meeting for the very well received member induction session which had taken place at Rugby Fire Station the previous day.

Resolved

That the Committee welcome the results of the Peer Challenge and receives periodic progress reports on the Action Plan.

7. Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2016-17

Mathew Dawson, Treasury and Pensions Group Manager, presented the report to the committee highlighting that the Council's investment portfolio at the end of the financial year 2016/17 was £223 million. Primarily, investments are made in money market funds with a small allocation of investment funds in social bonds and property.

Information was also provided to members concerning the debt financing and confirmation given that no new long term borrowing has been undertaken by the Council.

Resolved

That the Committee notes the monitoring report.

8. Update regarding Business Rates

It was noted that there were no further updates available since the last briefing note which was circulated to all members on 27 June 2017.

9. Urgent Matters

None

10. Any other business

None

Date of Next Meeting

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

The meeting rose at 15:16 pm

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Chair