

Minutes of the meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 18 March 2015 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillors Dransfield (Chairman), Gomm, Lambert, Reed, Schofield and Webb (part)

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development), D Sutherland (Acting Director of Finance and Assets), M Hemming (Head of Finance [Deputy Director]), J Parsons (Head of Service Development), G Smith (Head of Service Delivery), S Gownlock (Corporate Planning Manager), P Holland (Head of Projects and Transformation), E Andrews (Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Busby and Morris.

EX36 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 4 February 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX37 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

**Overview and Audit Committee – 11 March 2015
(a) Corporate Risk Management Policy**

The Committee considered the updated Corporate Risk Management Policy.

The Corporate Planning Manager asked members to note that the policy had been updated following the outcomes of an internal audit review of the Authority's general corporate risk processes which was presented to the Overview and Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 December 2014.

Whilst the audit report found good robust processes for management of corporate risks were in place with clear procedures for escalation of risk providing 'substantial' assurance to the Authority, it also noted that the policy was out of date and did not reflect the current processes operating within the Authority.

RESOLVED –

That the Corporate Risk Management Policy be approved.

EX38 QUARTER THREE BUDGET MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND DEBT MANAGEMENT APRIL-DECEMBER 2014

The Committee considered the revenue and capital budget monitoring and debt management performance report for the nine months to 31 December 2014.

The Lead Member for Finance, IT, Property and Procurement advised members this was a good news story and had been taken into account when setting the budget. There was a large amount of reserves and a large contingency, giving the Authority scope for further savings in subsequent budgets.

RESOLVED –

That the Executive Committee note the latest projected outturn forecast for the Authority as at 31 December 2014.

EX39 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2014/15 – QUARTER 3

The Committee considered the treasury management performance 2014/15. The accrued interest earned for the first nine months of 2014/15 was £101k, which is £48.5k higher than the budget for the nine month period.

RESOLVED –

That the Treasury Management Performance 2014/15 Quarter 3 report be noted.

(Councillor Webb joined the meeting).

EX40 FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME 2015: PROPOSED NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity introduced the report which sets out the proposed governance arrangements for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 which starts on 1 April 2015.

The Director of People and Organisational Development advised the Committee that there were three main elements to the governance arrangements for the new scheme, which were setting up a single national Scheme Advisory Board, publishing an employer cost cap and a having a Local Pension Board in each fire and rescue authority area (the first two elements were the responsibility of DCLG). It had been confirmed that the employer cost cap figures quoted in Annexe 1, would remain the same.

The Authority along with other local authorities and fire and rescue services had given feedback to the government that 46 local pension boards was too many and a national arrangement would be preferred. The position at present was that the Authority had to set up a local pension board from 1 April 2015 and the report sets out how this would be done.

There were significant rules about who could be members of the board. Elected members and members of the senior management team who had 'pensions functions' as part of their remit, would not be eligible to be on the board. Annexe 1 sets out how the board would operate.

The national training for all fire and rescue services is planned to take place in June 2015. The Authority's intention was to set up the board, participate in the training and take the terms of reference to the first meeting which would be held in July 2015. Arrangements would be reviewed in December 2015.

RESOLVED –

1. That the proposal for the Authority's Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 governance arrangements in relation to the Local Pension Board, as set out in the Terms of Reference and Annexe 1, be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the CFO/CE to set up the Authority's Local Pension Board by 1 April 2015.
3. That the recommendation that the Local Pension Board reports, as a minimum annually, to the appropriate Authority Committee be noted.
4. That it be noted that the governance arrangements will be reviewed at the end of 2015 in conjunction with future pension administration arrangements.

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets and the Head of Finance [Deputy Director] left the meeting.

EX41

DESIGNATION OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

The Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity introduced the report as the Authority had a legal obligation to designate a Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Finance Officer duties form part of the established Director of Finance and Assets post. The departure of the Director of Finance and Assets had initiated the need to review the current arrangements to ensure appropriate provisions were in place.

A question was asked as to who would be the nominated deputy and this would be the current Head of Finance [Deputy Director] Mark Hemming.

RESOLVED –

That David Sutherland be designated as the Chief Finance Officer whilst a full review of the Finance and Assets function is undertaken.

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets and the Head of Finance [Deputy Director] re-joined the meeting.

EX42 STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015-2025

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets introduced the report and advised the Committee that it was a refresh of the current Strategic Asset Management Plan agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 16 May 2012. Changes to the existing strategic plan are relatively minor, but it was important to demonstrate that an updated version remained in place. Property, Fleet, IT and Procurement Strategies had already been updated since the last plan was agreed.

RESOLVED –

That the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2015-2025 as drafted be agreed.

EX43 TRAINING PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL

The Head of Projects and Transformation advised members that the report was being presented to seek approval to work in a formal partnership with the Fire Service College. This proposal follows a strategic review of training which concluded that the partnership model would enable the Service to benefit from the opportunities that outsourcing would provide. The partnership will be piloted for a period of 12 months.

The Authority was the first to participate in a training partnership with the Fire Service College and was exploring opportunities for other fire and rescue services to get involved, and was actively seeking collaboration within Thames Valley fire and rescue services.

The Authority could see the value not just in savings that could be made, but also in the improvement of the quality of training and also the experience that crews would get exercising in what is a very unique facility.

There is also scope to grow this going forward and take it to different areas not just operational training but prevention and protection and all areas that encompass a fire and rescue service.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that a visit to the Fire Service College was being arranged for members and further details would follow. The Chief Fire Officer also asked members to visit their local Fire Station so crews could show them the work they undertake.

A member shared his experience of participating in a training exercise with the boat rescue team which he found very informative and wished to thank everyone involved. The Lead

Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity reminded members that the boat was not funded by government but funded by the Authority.

RESOLVED –

That the training partnership with the Fire Service College procured through the 'Wider Public Sector Framework' for a period of one year be approved.

EX44 INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS FROM 2015/16

The Head of Finance [Deputy Director] introduced the report which sets out the current insurance arrangements for the Authority, the claims history and the proposals for arrangements for 2015/16.

Two options were being considered, the first was to increase the level of excess so that the upfront insurance premium would be reduced.

The second was to join the Fire and Rescue Insurance Consortium (FRIC) which was a collective group of fire and rescue services who pooled insurance by sharing the risk to reduce costs. The drawback for the Authority was that it was relatively low risk and if it joined FRIC it would be taking on other authorities' risks and also potentially restricting operational changes.

The recommendation was for option 1 but to keep a watching brief on FRIC, to see if it works for other authorities and this would not preclude the Authority from participating in the future if it was in the best interest to do so.

Members requested that an update be presented to the Committee in one year.

RESOLVED –

1. That approval for the level of excess in relation to fleet insurance to be increased be provided.
2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer to determine the level of the excess.
3. That the creation of an insurance reserve on 31 March 2015 with an initial transfer of £50k from the projected underspend in 2014/15 be approved.

EX45 2015-20 CORPORATE PLAN

The Head of Service Development introduced the report and advised members that the Corporate Plan had been developed

since the approval of the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan at the December Fire Authority meeting.

It was a succinct document designed in plain English and accessible to all staff. It reinforced the link between planning and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and how subsidiary plans relate to each other and reinforce the 'vision' which was embedded in all staff.

There were four strategic objectives with performance outcomes that were clearly linked and underpinned by strategic enablers which had performance measures. Each objective and enabler had identified activities and projects which had been programmed against a timeline relating to the MTFP.

The Chief Fire Officer advised members that he was encouraging staff to come up with ideas of working differently, to help save money, but to guarantee an excellent service to the community.

RESOLVED –

That the 2015-20 Corporate Plan be recommended to the Authority for approval.

EX46

EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 4 February 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX47

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the date of the next Executive Committee would be held on Wednesday 13 May 2015 at 10.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.40AM.