

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

Present: Councillors Busby (Chairman) Dransfield, Gomm, Lambert, Morris, Reed and Schofield

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy 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 (Deputy Finance Director), F Mansfield (Human Resources Development Manager), G Smith (Head of Service Delivery), P Holland (Head of Projects and Transformation) J Parsons (Head of Service Development) N Boustred (Head of Training, Learning and Development) G Wylie (Property Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Marland.

At the start of the meeting, the Chairman proposed that the meeting observe a minute's silence to commemorate the victims of the Paris attacks on Friday 13 November 2015 and in honour of all those affected including those involved from the emergency services.

The meeting rose and observed a minute's silence

EX21 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 16 September 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX22 Quarter Two Budget Monitoring Performance and Debt Management April – September 2015

The Committee considered the revenue and capital budget monitoring and debt management performance report for the six months to 30 September 2015. It was reported that managers had positively and proactively controlled spend and forecast an underspend of £1.657m against a revenue budget of £28.7m. Excluding the Statutory Accounting and Contingency items totalling 904k, the overall forecast underspend on operational budgets reduced down to £717k.

RESOLVED –

1. That the budget virements as detailed in Appendix B be authorised.
2. That the latest projected outturn forecast for the Authority as at 30 September 2015 be noted.

EX23**REALIGNMENT OF RESERVE BALANCES TO FACILITATE THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that this report evaluated the on-going requirement for reserves currently held by the Authority; that the total useable reserves as at 31 March 2015 was £15.9M; and that it was essential that the level of reserves was considered in the context of other assets and liabilities, with particular regard given to capital financing requirement (CFR).

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets proposed that a sum of money from balances would be set aside, which would in effect cover the Authority's forward debt and free up the minimum revenue provision, which was currently around £250K per annum (excluding the finance lease element); and that whilst this would make more effective use of the current balances that the Authority holds it was a reversible process if necessary.

It was recommended that usable reserves were realigned and that the balances not immediately required were used to make a voluntary revenue provision to reduce the CFR (excluding finance lease) down to zero.

With reference to his report, the Acting Director of Finance and Assets advised that the National Audit Office had produced a report called 'The Financial Sustainability of Fire and Rescue Services.' The report shows that fire services generally over the last five years are managing, but there was increasing evidence that some fire services were using reserves to balance budgets, which was significant. The report would be available in the Members' Library.

RESOLVED –

1. That the proposed reallocation between reserves detailed in Appendix B be approved.
2. That the use of usable reserves to reduce the capital financing requirement (excluding finance lease) to zero be approved.

EX24**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

Members were advised that the Authority was required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances before 1 April each year and, in so doing, have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels of the constituent authorities when considering its own Scheme of Members' Allowances and confirm that it has done so when it gives public notice of the Scheme of Allowances.

This report recommended that the Scheme for 2016/17 increase the Members' allowances to the pay award for the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book), which was 1% for 2015/16.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to adopt the Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2016/17.

EX25

**BUSINESS AND SYSTEMS INTEGRATION PROJECT:
GOVERNANCE REPORTS ARRANGEMENTS**

The Head of Service Development advised Members that on 29 July the Committee had approved the business and systems integration project and this report details the governance arrangements for the project; that the project was sponsored by the Head of Service Development, the Director of People and Organisational Development and the Acting Director of Finance and Assets; and that a Project Manager, Anne-Marie Carter, had been appointed.

The Head of Service Development advised that the Project Manager would report project progress to the sponsors regularly and this was anticipated to be monthly in the first instance; that a formal reporting route through the business transformation board would also be carried out monthly; and that a periodic report would be submitted to the Overview and Audit Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the Overview and Audit Committee be the forum for receiving periodic reports from officers as to the progress of the BASI project.

EX26

PENSION UPDATE

Councillor Lambert declared an interest as a Member of the Buckinghamshire County Council Pension Fund Committee.

The Human Resources Development Manager provided the Committee with an update on the various pension related activities currently being managed by the Authority, and the impact for the Service.

Members were advised that over the last few years the Authority had experienced a significant and unprecedented volume of work on pension related matters, with the level of complexity and administrative burden being met mainly within Human Resources; and that the projects undertaken had created a huge administrative burden and steep learning curve to staff within the Authority.

The Human Resources Development Manager reported that the main lever of change was the result of a review undertaken by Lord Hutton, whose report was published in March 2011, in which it concluded that public service pensions should be, affordable and sustainable, adequate and fair, supporting productivity, transparent and simple; and that following the recommendations within the Hutton report, all public service pension schemes were reformed and the Public Service Pension Act received Royal Assent in April 2013.

It was reported that the Authority now co-ordinates 5 pension schemes; that all members of the LGPS Scheme transferred into the 2014 scheme on 1 April 2014; that the FPS 2015 was one of the last pension schemes to change and came into effect on 1 April 2015.

It was reported to Members that to introduce the changes to the pension scheme, briefings were held for staff in March 2015 and these were well received; that a breakdown of the numbers affected by the changes to the pension schemes were shown in section 1.4 of the annex to the report; and that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had started the process of a legal challenge on the transitional protections in the 2015 pension scheme regulations which was a national issue affecting all fire and rescue authorities and was being dealt with centrally by DCLG.

The Human Resources Development Manager provided an update that the two recommendations from the injury award investigation had been actioned and the Authority was working with Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to secure a new pension administrator and this was currently at the tender process stage; and that it was anticipated to have a new provider procured by the end of December with a cut over of 1 April 2016; and that the Authority was working with Buckinghamshire County Council and the new provider to ensure a smooth transition and that service was not detrimentally affected in the meantime; and that the draft ill health and injury award procedure was currently being reviewed in the region.

RESOLVED –

That the update on pension matters within the Authority be noted.

EX27

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as an appendix to the report contains information relating to an individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as an appendix to the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person; and on these grounds it was considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, so that the meeting may consider the following matter:

Appointment of Director Finance and Assets (Chief Finance Officer)

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets, Deputy Finance Director, Director of Legal and Governance, Human Resources Development Manager, Head of Service Delivery, Head of

Projects and Transformation, Head of Service Development, Head of Training, Learning and Development and the Property Manager left the meeting.

**EX28 APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR FINANCE AND ASSETS
(CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER)**

RESOLVED:

1. That David Sutherland be selected as Director Finance and Assets (Chief Finance Officer) to commence in post on 18 November 2015.
2. That the remuneration for the Director Finance and Assets (Chief Finance Officer) as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

EX29 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contain information relating to an individual; and on these grounds it was considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, so that the meeting may consider the following matter:

EX30 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 16 September 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX31 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the date of the next Executive Committee would be held on Wednesday 3 February 2016 at 10.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.55AM.