

Minutes of the meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2018 at 10.00 am.

Present: Councillors Carroll, Lambert, Marland, McCall, McDonald and Reed (Chairman) and Sullivan

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 (Director of Finance and Assets), M Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), N Boustred (Head of Service Delivery), J Parsons (Head of Service Development), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) T Sanwo (Principal Accountant) and J McNeill (Regional Director, South East Employers)

Apologies: Councillor Roberts

EX25 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 22 November 2017, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX26 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Lead Member for People and Equality and Diversity advised Members that the Authority was required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances before 1 April each year and, in doing so, have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels (IRP) of the constituent authorities, Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council.

The officer's recommendation was for allowances to be increased in line with the pay award for 17/18 agreed by the NJC for Grey Book staff.

A discussion was held about Group Leaders' Allowances in the constituent authorities where proportionality was applied based on size of group; and where only one SRA can be claimed.

The Chief Fire Officer suggested that the Director of Legal and Governance could look at the Scheme of Members' Allowances in consultation with the Group Leaders.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that he would undertake a review, but it would ultimately be for the Authority to decide on what it wished to adopt having regard to the IRP reports of Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to adopt a Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2018/19 (Appendix C which includes figures indicative of a 1% increase) with an uplift from the 17/18 Scheme to reflect any final Grey Book pay award for 17/18.

Councillor McCall's abstention was noted.

EX27 BUDGET MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND DEBT MANAGEMENT APRIL – NOVEMBER 2017

The Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement advised the Committee that there was very little change from the last update.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that managers had positively and proactively controlled spend and forecast an underspend of £262k, against a revenue budget of £28.210m. This represented a 0.93% variance against the budget.

RESOLVED –

That the latest projected outturn forecast for the Authority as at 30 November 2017 be noted.

EX28 THE PRUDENTIAL CODE, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION

The Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement advised the Committee that this report was being presented as the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement were required to be approved by the Authority and to support the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that this was a statutory report that had to be published each year the basic purpose of which was to show that borrowing was affordable over the longer term. The Authority's borrowing was affordable and there were no plans for further borrowing in the foreseeable future.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to approve:

1. the Prudential Indicators; and
2. the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement

EX29 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2018/19 TO 2020/21

The Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement advised the Committee that this report was setting the precept for the following year.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the Revised Appendix 1 had been updated following confirmation from the billing authorities of amounts receivable from Council Tax and Business Rates, the statutory deadline for which was 31 January, which was after this report had been produced. There was no change to the Council Tax figures, but the good news was that the Business Rates had increased slightly from £5.308m to £5.421m, an increase of £113k. Growth for 2018/19 had been increased by £113k. This was to provide additional operational posts to further enhance the resilience of the Authority's response model, support the recruitment programme and drive the change programme.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the final settlement was presented to Parliament yesterday and there was no change to the provisional settlement in terms of the Council Tax referendum limit, which was to go up by no more than 3%, the recommendation was a 2.99% increase. There were some significant risks around the budget, the biggest one was the pay award. The Authority had budgeted for 1% which was in line with its efficiency plan and it would maintain that position, any pay increase over and above that would need to be funded by central government.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that Appendix 2 showed the proposed Capital Programme. This showed that the Authority's programme was affordable and it showed that there was funding available. The Authority was aware that as building work was about to commence on the Blue Light Hub in Milton Keynes, there was also a need to do some building work in the south of the county around the Wycombe/Beaconsfield area and any surplus funding that was available would be very quickly used up.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that Appendix 3 showed the amount payable for a typical band D property, assuming Members approve a 2.99% increase in Council Tax. A band D would go up to £62.70 per year, which was an increase of about £1.82, compared to last year, or around 3.5p per week.

A Member asked if the USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) funding was guaranteed and was advised that the position on USAR was that the Government had been talking about a review of the USAR provision for a number of years and the funding goes from year to year. This year the Government was going to fund USAR for another 12 months, in previous years the Authority had only been funded for 6 months at a time. If the Authority loses the USAR grant it was a very significant loss, which would push the Authority into some very difficult decisions at that point.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to:

1. Note and have due regard to the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see section 8 of Annex A);
2. Approve a Council Tax precept of £62.70 for a band D equivalent property (a 2.99% increase from 2017/18 – equal to 3.5p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1;
3. Approve the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2.

EX30

PROVISIONAL 2018-19 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT (THE CONSULTATION)

The Lead Member for Finance, IT and Procurement advised Members that due to the timescale for responding to the Consultation (the deadline was 16 January) a response had already been submitted and was attached for Members to note. The Consultation looked for views on the Provisional 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement, which was published on 19 December 2017. The significant question for the Authority was regarding the Council Tax referendum principles for 2018-19.

RESOLVED –

That the submitted response to the consultation be noted.

EX31

PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Assets advised the Committee that in May 2014 a partnership strategy was approved including a set of nine key principles that need to be determined in order to justify any relationship with another body as a true partnership. In carrying out this review a formal Partnership Register was established, together with a separate list of joint working groups and other forums attended either by officer and/or Members of the Authority that do not meet the fuller criteria for a true partnership.

RESOLVED –

1. That the revised Partnership Register, set out in Appendix 2 be approved.
2. That the separate list of joint working groups where the Authority has an interest, set out in Appendix 3 be approved.
3. That the content of Appendix 4 be noted.

EX32**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED –

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 is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, so that the meeting could consider the following matter:

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 (Director of Finance and Assets), M Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), N Boustred (Head of Service Delivery), J Parsons (Head of Service Development) and T Sanwo (Principal Accountant) left the meeting

EX33**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT BOARD REMUNERATION AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2017 AND ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EMPLOYEE BONUS SCHEME**

The Committee considered the report and appendices, details of which were noted in the confidential/exempt minutes.

RESOLVED:

It was recommended that:

1. A financial recognition of achievements to the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CE) through a bonus payment be approved.
2. The level of bonus payment to the Chief Fire Officer be agreed.

(The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive re-joined the meeting)

3. An amount of funds to be allocated to other members of the SMB by the Chief Fire Officer based on individual performance reviews be agreed.
4. The summary of the awards made in 2016/17 under the Authority's Employee Bonus Scheme set out in Appendix 2 be noted.
5. The recommendation set out in Appendix 7 of the attached report be approved.

6. A review to be carried out in the coming year, of the Senior Management Team Pay Review methodology as set out in Appendix 8 be approved.

EX34 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

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 is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, so that the meeting could consider the following matter:

EX35 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on Wednesday 22 November 2017, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX36 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the date of the next Executive Committee meeting would be held on Wednesday 14 March 2018 at 10.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.30 AM.