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MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**NOTES: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

**MINUTES
OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**
Remotely VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AND IN THE CAER SUITE
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
29 JANUARY 2024

10:00

Present at Meeting:

Chair: Councillor Carl Jordan

Members: Cllrs: Edwin Roderick,
Maureen Bowen, David Bryan,
Patience Bentu, Gareth Lloyd,
John Davies, Matthew Crowley,
Gwynfor Thomas, Elwyn Williams,
Jan Curtice, Sharon Freeguard, and
Rob Evans

Apologies: Cllrs: Dan Thomas

In Attendance: D Daycock (Clerk and Monitoring Officer), S Mansbridge (Treasurer/Section 151 Officer), I Cray (DCFO), C Flannery (ACFO), M Harries (ACO), P Greenslade (AM), J Lewis (AM), G Thomas (T/AM), C Jackson (Corporate Head of Resources), M Miles (Head of HR), Stephen Phillips (Head of Finance), H Rees (Head of Procurement) A Lewis (T/ Head of CCBD) and A Hawkes (Democratic Services Officer)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dan Thomas.

2 Declaration by Members of any Personal and / or Prejudicial Interests

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer gave advice regarding the actual and/or potential interests on the agenda to be disclosed verbally and then to be confirmed in writing, in line with the requirements of the Code of Conduct. Following this, declarations were made as follows:

- All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any matters affecting or relating to their own Constituent Authority.

3 Chair's Announcements/Personal Matters

The Chair extended best wishes and a speedy recovery to the Deputy Chair, Cllr Dan Thomas after a recent illness.

Members were provided with an operational response update on recent incidents.

4 To confirm and approve as a true record, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Resource Management Committee held on 20 November 2023

The minutes of the Resource Management Committee meeting held on 20th of November were approved as a true record of proceedings. There were no matters arising.

5 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring Report as at 31 December 2023

The Section 151 Officer presented the budget monitoring report to Members, which summarised the revenue budget and capital programme position for the 2023/24 financial year, as of 31 December 2023.

It was reported that the total approved revenue budget was £63.257m, with the current actual net expenditure and forecast of £63.275m. It was noted that there is a forecast overspend of £18k.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report. Consideration was given to several factors set out in section 3.1 of the report which the budget had been based upon considering expenditure to date, known commitments, pressures and savings.

Committee Members were provided with an overview of the expenditure on capital projects, compared against the revised Capital Programme set out in Appendix B of the report.

Members were informed that the approved original Capital Programme for 2023/24 was £9.436m and that the Strategic Asset Capital Management Group (SACMG) had

undertaken a full review of the 5-year capital programme considering additional resources identified since approval such as capital grants, existing and new projects.

Members were reminded that the 5-year capital programme, including the revised programme for 2023/24 at £12.844m, was approved by the Fire Authority on 18 December 2023.

Members were informed that as of 31 December 2023, the Authority had incurred £4.977m of capital expenditure and has raised commitments to the value of £3.708m with the total of actual expenditure and commitments being £8.685m.

Members then received a breakdown of the grants allocated for 2023/24 set out in Appendix C of the report, whereby a total of £3.718m revenue and £1.5m capital had been provided on an all-Wales basis (shared with North and South Wales Fire Authorities), of which £967k revenue and £801k capital had been allocated to MAWWFRA. It was explained that the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service also receives specific grants, and that currently £588k revenue grants are allocated. It is expected that all grants will be spent in full and in accordance with the associated terms and conditions.

Attention was then drawn to the prudential and treasury management indicators set out in Appendix D of the report. The Section 151 Officer confirmed that all treasury management activity for the period was within the approved indicators, that the investments met the creditworthiness criteria set out in the Annual Investment Strategy.

It was highlighted that as at 31 December 2023 no new loans have been raised with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) which offers a minimum loan period of 1 year, however, with economists predicting interest rates will fall during 2024, short-term borrowing has been arranged to meet cash flow forecast requirements. A 6-month loan of £5m has been raised from Carmarthenshire County Council and a further loan of £2.5m will be raised in January from Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTBC). It was highlighted that both loans had been arranged through a broker.

Cllr John Davies asked the Section 151 Officer how the decision was made to raise a loan with Carmarthenshire CC and NPTBC and what interest rate was applied.

The Section 151 Officer explained that an email had been sent to the Local Authorities within the service area to request the loans and that Carmarthenshire CC and NPTBC had responded that they were in a position to do so with a rate of 5.6% over 6 months. It was also explained that Local Authorities operated under their own Treasury Management Strategy and were not necessarily in a position to lend to the Fire Authority.

Cllr John Davies requested feedback on the On-Call project and how the additional funding is being used.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Flannery explained that it is currently too early to measure, and accordingly give clear feedback, however anecdotally the scheme has

been well received, in particular the additional funding made available for attendance at training for On-Call firefighters.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee note the contents of the report.

6 Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management Report as of 30 November 2023

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) presented Committee with the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management Report for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 November 2023.

Members' attention was drawn to section 7 of Appendix 1 which set out the number of on-duty injuries during the reporting period, together with comparable figures for 2022/23 and a breakdown of injuries by employee type and cause.

Members were informed that 7 injuries had been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Reference was made to the Corporate Risk Audits which were undertaken to ensure that appropriate standards were maintained within the Service's buildings and facilities, in addition to the existing provision of training, safety alerts and procedures to employees in order to minimise the number of injuries. Furthermore, Members were informed that 42 reports of 'Near-Miss Events' had been reported to the Corporate Risk Department, all of which had been investigated and monitored at the Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Committee meetings. Members were pleased to note that the Service's robust Health and Safety policies were being utilised by members of staff, who were encouraged to report such issues which, in turn, ensured that any unsafe/unhealthy working conditions were addressed promptly.

The DCFO provided Members with details of the 1 physical attack and 1 verbal abuse reported during the reporting period. Whilst Committee was pleased to note that the number of such incidents remained low, Members endorsed the requirement to monitor incidents to ensure that all aspects of employee personal safety was monitored.

The DCFO concluded by providing an overview of the 80 vehicle accidents which had occurred during the reporting period, together with a breakdown of vehicle accidents by cause, cost and activity. The Committee noted that the majority of vehicle accidents were attributable to striking fixed objects and tended to occur in cases where large appliances travelled on narrow roads during the course of their duties.

Cllr Gwynfor Thomas asked the DCFO where carcinogenic incidents would be reported.

The DCFO confirmed that any incidents would be reported in the Health and Safety report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee notes the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare information contained within the Report.

7 Procurement Exemptions Granted During 2023

The Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Mydrian Harries introduced Head of Procurement, Helen Rees to the meeting.

Members were informed that Section CS03 of the Wales Fire and Rescue Services' Contract Standing Orders details the procedure for obtaining Exemptions to the procurement provisions set out in Standing Orders arising in exceptional circumstances and that furthermore all Exemptions are reported to the Resource Management Committee on an annual basis for information only.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which summarised all Exemptions granted during the 2023 calendar year. It was highlighted that the list of exemptions had continued to reduce due to improved planning.

Members considered the contents of Appendix 1.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee note the contents of the report.

8 Gender Pay Gap Report 2023

ACO, Mydrian Harries presented the report to Members for information.

Members attention was drawn to the Gender Pay Gap Report (GPG) set out at Appendix 1. It was explained that the report was written to comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and provides the Service's position as at 31 March 2023 for the 2023 reporting period.

It was highlighted that the figures show that female staff earn on average 9.9% less than male staff which equates to £1.44 an hour less, however it was noted that this is an improvement from 2022 whereby females earned on average 10.48% less than male staff.

Members were asked to note that women make up less than 18% of the total workforce which creates the imbalance and not inequality of pay for the same positions.

It was stressed that the Service is committed to addressing and reducing the gender pay gap and a programme of work has been identified to do so by positive action and community engagement, supporting a diverse and inclusive culture and environment and reviewing the recruitment process.

Cllr Matthew Crowley left the meeting at 11:02. Prior to leaving the meeting leaving the meeting, Cllr Crowley made reference to his recent visit to Port Talbot fire station and requested information regarding the amount of PPE that is provided to stations.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee note the content of the Service's Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023, prior to publishing.

9 Annual Equality Report 2022/23

ACO Mydrian Harries presented the Annual Equality Report to Members.

Members attention was drawn to Appendix 1 which contained the Annual Equality Report (AER) 2022/23 which is the third annual report detailing progress made against the 2020 – 2024 Strategic Equality Plan which lays down the foundations for future work.

Members were also informed that the AER 2022/23 updates on objectives within the Strategic Equality Plan surrounding the Service's engagement work with local partners and stakeholders as part of Community Safety initiatives.

The Committee were provided with a synopsis of the Service's actions carried out in order to meet the 3 objectives contained in the AER.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee note the content of the Service's Annual Equality Report for 2022/23, prior to publishing at the end of financial year 23/24.

10 Any other items of business that by reason of special circumstances, the Chair decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

There were no items of urgent business.

Meeting closed 11:25