

Agenda Item 2

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY, RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

HELD ON 10th NOVEMBER 2011

Present:

Councillor David Acton (Chairman), Councillor Henry Cooper (Vice-Chair),
Councillors John Bell, Lynda Byrne, Derek Heffernan, Barrie Holland,
Michael Jones, Bernard Judge, Tommy Judge, Alan Matthews,
Andrew Morgan, John O'Brien, Paul Shannon and Fred Walker

Also in Attendance: Steve McGuirk (County Fire Officer & Chief Executive),
Paul McKevitt (Treasurer, Wigan MBC), Ged Murphy (Director of Finance and
Technical Services), Peter O'Reilly (Director of Prevention and Protection),
Anita Wainwright (Director of People and Organisation Development),
Gwynne Williams (Deputy Clerk and Authority Solicitor) and Donna Parker
(Democratic Services Manager)

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Smith.

26. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd September 2011 were confirmed as
a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

28. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

There were no items of urgent business received.

29. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That the public be excluded from the meeting when the following
item was considered for the reason set out below:-

Agenda Item No.	Title	Minute No. (to be added)	Description of Exempt Information by reference to the paragraph number(s) in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972
Appendix 6 to Item 7	Appendix 6 – Budget Monitoring Quarter 2 2011/12: Revenue/Capital	31.	1 (Information relating to any individual) and 3 (Information relating to the

			financial or business affairs of any person or organisation, including the Authority)
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30. TREASURY POLICY - MID YEAR REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer which reviewed the operation and exercise of delegated Treasury Management powers. The report covered the first six months of 2011/12 considered the prospects for the remainder of the financial year and reviewed the credit ratings of the organisations with which the Authority could place its surplus funds and explained how the lending list was drawn up.

The Treasurer made reference to the recent down grade in the credit ratings of UK financial institutions as a result of the continuing uncertainty over the quality of the euro zone sovereign debt which had led to the Authority reducing the maximum investment period of deposits with these institutions to three months.

Recommended: That the report be accepted and comments be noted.

31. BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 2 2011/2012 REVENUE/CAPITAL

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer which outlined the position of expenditure against Revenue Budget including the firefighters' Pensions Account and the Capital Programme at the end of quarter two for 2011/12 (refer to Appendix 1 to 5 of the report). It was anticipated that by the end of the year there would be a £2.180m underspend when compared against the Annual Budget.

It was reported that this was the second budget monitoring report of the year. The report detailed the summary position for both capital and revenue expenditure which provided the opportunity to identify the projected level of balances for the Authority for the coming year. The report also detailed the summary position to highlight to Members any major variances and to provide an explanation for those variations.

Members had an in-depth discussion on the Capital Programme Monitoring and Revenue Balances with regard to expenditure in 2011/12 and future years.

In conclusion, the predicted position reported provided assurances that efficiencies were being achieved and that the position would help underpin the financial future of the Authority and that the Authority's financial management systems remained sound.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report, comments raised and projected year end variations, be noted.
2. The revised position on the capital programme, including the movement of budgets between schemes, be approved.

32. SMOKE FREE POLICY

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which sought approval of the 'Smoke Free' Policy. The Policy would support the 'Health and Wellbeing' Strategy that was approved by this Committee on 21st July 2011 (Minute 9 refers) by establishing GMFRS as a 'Smoke Free' workplace and reducing the exposure to second hand smoke.

It was reported that to support the policy and to incentivise staff to stop smoking GMFRS would be offering to reimburse prescriptions for 'Nicotine Replacement Therapy' for the first two weeks. This initiative would be funded from the existing Occupational Health budget and would support initially 100 employees on a first come first served basis.

Members were advised that the representative bodies had been consulted on the proposed policy and a copy of a response from Unison/Unite was circulated at the meeting, for Members' reference.

Members had an in-depth discussion on the proposal and in conclusion supported the implementation of the 'Smoke Free Policy' across the Service and the assistance being offered to employees as part of this.

Recommended: That:

1. The 'Smoke Free' Policy, as detailed at Appendix A of the report, be approved.
2. The Human Resources Directorate via Occupational Health continue to offer assistance to employees as part of this Policy.
3. The implementation date of the Policy to coincide with the National 'No Smoking Day' on 14th March 2012, be approved allowing five months for people who want to take the opportunity to quit smoking to do so.

33. FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME (1992) AND NEW FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME (2006) - PROPOSED INCREASES TO EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION RATES, EFFECTIVE FROM 1 APRIL 2012 - CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which advised that the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) were carrying out a consultation exercise in respect of the 'Firefighters' Pension Scheme (1992) and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme

(2006); Proposed increases to employee contribution rates effective from 1st April 2012.

The report detailed a draft response from GMFRA to be submitted to CLG by the deadline date of 2nd December 2011. A copy of the consultation document was attached at Appendix 1 of the report for Members' reference.

Members had an in-depth discussion on the content of the consultation document and the proposed response.

In conclusion, the Committee were content to submit the proposed response, however, requested the response to emphasise the relative crudeness of the approach asking all schemes to raise their contribution levels by 3.2% when the Fire Scheme were already contributing the highest levels. Also, Officers were requested to strengthen the specific point regarding the balance of contributions between employer and employee of the new Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

Resolved: That the proposed response to the Consultation, as detailed within the report, including the Committee's comments as detailed above be endorsed and submitted to CLG prior to the response deadline date of 2nd December 2011.

34. NORTH WEST CHARTER ON ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT - MEMBER PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS OUTCOMES 2011

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which advised Members of the outcomes from the 'Member Personal Development Interviews' which had taken place in September 2011. A consultant from North West Employers Organisation was commissioned to undertake this piece of work and in total 22 out of the 30 Elected Members and all 4 Independent Members completed a Member Development Interview.

At the conclusion of the interview process a detailed report was produced outlining the outcomes from the interviews and the individual and overall Member development needs indentified. These had now been factored into the Member Training and Development Programme for 2011/12 which would be monitored by the Member Development Steering Group.

It was reported that the Member Personal Development Interview process would be repeated on an annual basis.

Recommended: That

1. The report and comments raised be noted.
2. The Member Training Needs which had been identified as part of the process and the Member Training and Development Programme for 2011/12, be noted.

3. Any training and development identified through the Member Personal Development Process which required external sourcing/funding to be approved by the Clerk in consultation with the Member Champions for Member Development.
4. The continuation of the Member Training and Development process be supported.

35. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT ON BOROUGHES - JUNE TO OCTOBER 2011

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided an update on the level and nature of Fire Authority Member Engagement taking place across the Boroughs of GMFRS, during the six month period 1st June to 31st October 2011.

The information contained within the report demonstrated that regular and significant levels of Authority Member engagement had taken place across the Service within the reportable period, and such activities were fundamental in fostering relationships between Authority Members and Service Personnel.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report, be noted.
2. The Authority continue to support the engagement of Members of the Authority with their respective Borough Management Teams.
3. All activities and visits undertaken by Members whether on the Borough, in the County or elsewhere nationally, are properly recorded, to aid collection of information for future reports.
4. A further update report on Member Engagement on Boroughs be submitted to the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee on 17th May 2012.

CHAIRMAN

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