



Minutes

Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 3 February 2023

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present: Cllr Steve Tulley (in the chair), Cllrs Riaz Ahmed, Gohar Almas, Caroline Anderson, Peter Harrand, Zara Hussain, John Illingworth, Nusrat Mohammed, Darren O'Donovan, Mike Pollard and Adam Zaman

In Attendance:

Apologies: None

22. Minutes of meeting held on 14.10.22

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

23. Matters Arising

None

24. Urgent items

None

25. Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

26. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

27. Annual Procurement Review

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report to provide Members with an annual update on procurement activity.

It was reported that;

- The procurement team is now fully staffed
- Workshop sessions on Procurement and Contract Management have been delivered
- Further improvements have been made to the Contract Register, which in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, is published quarterly on the Authority's website.
- The Procurement SharePoint page now includes procedures, standards, guidance and template tender documents
- Since the introduction of the new e-procurement portal (In-Tend) in October 2020, sixty-seven formal tender processes have been compliantly published and awarded.
- Savings and efficiencies were provided on the Savings and Efficiencies Log at annex 2 to the report
- There have been four exemptions to the CPR process above £75,000 which have been approved by Management Board
- The annual KPI update
- The regional procurement group continues to consider alignment of Contracts Registers to increase the number of regional procurement projects to be undertaken
- Supply Chain risk management continues to be monitored and The Authority now has a Modern Slavery Policy and Statement, which are published on the website.
- The Procurement Strategy 2022-2025 is now published on the Authority's website.
- The Head of Procurement actively participates in the quarterly Environmental Working Group meetings and the United Nations Sustainability Goals have been discussed, with a decision to concentrate on a number of these goals which are intrinsically linked to the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Members requested an explanation of the Strategy in the Procurement Team Action Plan at annex 1 to the report which has not yet been started and were assured an update would be brought to the next meeting.

Overall members were pleased with the outcome of the introduction of new procurement systems and were pleased to see the savings that had been achieved.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

28. Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme Update

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Delivery informing members of the transition on to the Emergency Service Network (ESN). It was confirmed that the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme timeline will be delayed by 12 -18 months due to a Home Office led re-procurement of a major element of the system. Members were advised this means the disbanding of a fully funded project team and the redeployment of some resources back to establishment and that a further update will be provided when the project is restarted.

Members asked for more information on the faults experienced with Motorola and were advised these were commercially sensitive and confidential but were thought to be related to data storage and firewall issues. Members expressed concern regarding the funding of the delayed project due to inflation and whether the current kit was fit for purpose.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

29. Treasury Management Mid Year Report

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report to provide Members with a mid-year review of the treasury management activity of the Authority, as required by the adopted CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

The report examined treasury management performance for the period 1st of April to the 20th of December 2022 and provided assurance that it had operated within the approved strategy and reported on the impact of the following;

- Economic Update & Interest Rates
- Treasury Management Strategy Statement
- Investment Performance
- Borrowing Performance
- Revenue Budget Monitoring
- Prudential Indicators
- Risk and Compliance Issues

The report demonstrated that the Authority is operating within the Treasury Management Strategy and that activity complied with the approved prudential indicators.

Members were asked to note that the interest rates and CPI had changed since the report had been written and asked if the Public Works Loan rate had been affected. Members noted that whilst inflation was expected to fall, prices would remain high. Members questioned if there was any increasing concern for the availability of funds which reach maturity and were assured all investments are underwritten by central government and due diligence was exercised by our Treasury Management Advisors, Link Group.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

30. Draft Treasury Management Strategy

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report detailing the Draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24. Members were advised that the report met the requirements of both CIPFA's Code of Practice, and the current 2010 Guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The report detailed the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code and Prudential Code which were published on the 20th of December 2021 and listed the revisions that need to be included in the reporting framework from the 2023/24 financial year.

The report also covered the following issues:

- Capital Strategy

- Borrowing Strategy
- Investment Strategy
- Prudential Indicators

Members asked for and were given, clarification of assumed asset lives, which vary in accordance with the asset.

RESOLVED

- a) That the content of the report be noted
- b) That the Full Authority be recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 including;
 - (i) Treasury Management Practices
 - (ii) the capital strategy
 - (iii) the borrowing strategy
 - (iv) the investment strategy
 - (v) the policy for provision of repayment of debt
 - (vi) the Treasury Management Prudential indicators
 - (vii) the Capital Plan 2023/24 – 2027/28

31. Particulate Flash Hoods

Members considered a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Service Delivery which sought approval to drawdown capital funds to replace the current flash hoods, thereby improving the safety of operational staff. The funds were approved in the capital plan for 2022/23.

RESOLVED

That the purchase of particulate flash hoods is approved

32. Uniform Replacement

Members considered a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Service Delivery which sought approval to drawdown capital funds to purchase replacement uniform to introduce a single workwear uniform for all staff. The funds were approved in the capital plan for 2022/23.

Members requested confirmation that the majority of staff are happy with the new uniform and were pleased to see cultural and gender diversity had been taken into account.

RESOLVED

That the purchase of replacement uniform is approved

33. Wildfire Vehicles

Members considered a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Service Delivery which sought approval to drawdown capital funds to purchase wildfire vehicles to provide additional response capabilities to meet the growing demands that climate driven incidents are placing on the Service. The funds were approved in the capital plan for 2022/23.

RESOLVED

That the purchase of wildfire vehicles is approved

34. Quarterly Financial Review

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report providing an overview of the financial performance of the Authority in the first 9 months of the current financial year. The report gave details of revenue and capital expenditure and gave an update on the Covid19 grant expenditure.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) That members approve the revised capital plan

35. Draft Budget Report

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report providing a draft capital investment plan, a draft revenue budget and the 4 year Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/24. The report included details of the Draft Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24, a standstill budget, and a summary of activity in the 2022/23 financial year.

The report gave further details of the following

- Proposed Capital Investments
- Prudential Indicators
- Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan
- Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
- The Chief Financial Officer's Positive Assurance Statement
- Medium Term Financial Planning

Members asked for clarification of the following points:

- Vehicle fuel budget
- Replacement of fire appliances.

Members were then given a verbal update on the position regarding the potential strike action and were assured that business continuity plans were going well, including local discussions for prevention activity.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Chair