

Minutes

Finance and Resources Committee

Date: 31 January 2025

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present:

Cllr Tulley (in the Chair) Cllrs Buckley, Carlisle, Downes, Keith, O'Donovan, Pollard, Salam and Wood (as substitute for Cllr Hinchcliffe)

Apologies:

Cllr Hinchcliffe and Shaheen

1. Minutes of meeting held on 18 October 2024

Resolved

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 18 October 2024 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. Urgent items

There were no urgent items

4. Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the public

5. Declarations of interest

There were no disclosures of disposable pecuniary interests.

6. Quarterly Financial Review

The Director of Finance and Procurement presented a report detailing the quarterly review of the financial performance of the Authority up to the end of December 2024 and requesting approval of the revised capital plan.

Members requested and were given further information and background on the following:

- Increased numbers for the intake onto the recent training cohort
- Slippage of the Otley redevelopment programme due to expansion of the plan following staff changes
- The options regarding the sale of used appliances
- Debtors
- The possibility of comparisons with the financial arrangements of other Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs)

Resolved

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

7. Draft Capital Investment Plan, Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

The Director of Finance and Procurement presented a report detailing the draft revenue budget for 2025/26 along with the four year medium term financial plan and capital programme, including the Draft Local Government Finance Settlement 2025/26, a standstill budget and a summary of activity in the current 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 thanked the Chief Finance and Procurement Manager for such a detailed comprehensive report.

Members drilled down into the figures presented in the report and agreed accurate projections are very difficult to make due to the volatility of the economic environment. Members discussed the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and the options regarding equalising the current surplus reported in the media.

Members were assured that all capital schemes will be presented to this committee for approval.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

8. Treasury Management Mid Year Review

The Director of Finance and Procurement presented a report giving a mid year review of the Treasury Management Activity of the Authority in the 2024/25 financial year.

Members challenged the report author on the value of the mid year review due to the volatile economic situation and it was noted that it is required to meet The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) regulations.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

9. Treasury Management Strategy

The Chief Finance and Procurement Officer presented a report detailing the Draft Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26. 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

Resolved

- a) That the content of the report be noted
- b) That the Full Authority be recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 including;

- a) Treasury Management Practices
- b) the Capital Strategy
- c) the Borrowing Strategy
- d) the Investment Strategy
- e) the policy for provision of repayment of debt
- f) the Treasury Management Prudential indicators
- g) the Capital Plan 2025/26 – 2029/30

10. Procurement Annual Review

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

It was reported that

- Savings and efficiencies achieved in this financial year to date are £819,292
- The current Contracts Register records 256 contract arrangements with an annual value of £25.7m
- Since the introduction of the E-procurement portal (In-Tend) in October 2020, one hundred and thirteen formal tender processes have been compliantly published and awarded
- Compliance with CPR (Contract Procedure Rules) remains positive. To date this year there are 7 recorded non-compliance contracts
- The new Procurement Strategy 2025-2028 has been drafted and will be published in January 2025.
- The regional Yorkshire and Humberside procurement group continues to work effectively together to identify appropriate collaborative projects.
- The use of national framework agreements continues with a small amount of income received from CCS (Crown Commercial Services) and YPO (Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation).
- The Head of Procurement was a key member of a small working group to complete the successful implementation of the Procurement and Commercial Fire Standard.
- The new Procurement Act was given Royal Assent in October 2023 and is now planned to go live in February 2025. Members of the Procurement Team have attended all appropriate training sessions and webinars.

Members requested and were given clarification of the savings tracker, the SIM card savings and the contract for fire kit with Ballyclare Ltd.

Members thanked the report author for including the comments made by WYFRS staff in the report and also thanked the Procurement Team for their successful move to incorporate the new complex rules and were pleased to note that the Service is now reaping the rewards from their hard work.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

11. Virement for Otley and Rawdon Fire Station Redevelopment

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Support which requested approval for funds originally set out in the Authority's Capital Plan for Hunslet Fire Station to be vired to Otley and Rawdon Fire Stations in the current financial year and to create a new capital scheme to replace the boilers in the Technical Rescue Training Centre (TRTC).

Members challenged the report author on the age of the boilers being replaced.

Resolved

- a) That Members note the report
- b) That members approve the virement of £800k from the Capital Plan for Hunslet Fire Station to Otley and Rawdon Fire Station
- c) That Members approve a new capital scheme of £59,682.00 to replace the boilers in TRTC.

12. Firefighter PPE Replacement

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Support which detailed the Firefighter PPE Replacement Programme for 2025.

Members challenged the report author on the increased number of washing cycles which are required having been identified through training and ongoing changes in the culture of all Fire and Rescue Services.

Resolved

- a) That Members note the report
- b) That Members approve the purchase of PPE with a value of £1.393m.

13. Vehicle Telematics Replacement

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Support which detailed the Vehicle Telematics Replacement Programme for 2025.

Members challenged the report author on the number of vehicles with the kit installed and the ability to make any updates to the system which could be identified after installation, as WYFRS are the experts on the ground with hands on experience. Members noted that the live tracking of vehicles is vital and the ability to access and analyse data through the portal is invaluable. Members discussed the National Speed Limit database.

Resolved

- a) That Members note the report
- b) That Members approve the £200,000 capital and £310,000 revenue costs associated with the replacement of vehicle-based telematics devices.

Chair