



**MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE held on Tuesday 18 November 2014 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Joyce (Chair), P Carey, E Johnson, L Jones, G Merry, S Nelson, C Thorley and D Topping.

**PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC**

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

**B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Biggin and B Rudd.

**C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of Members interests.

**D MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 25 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.**

Members noted the meeting of the Policy Committee scheduled for Wednesday 17 September 2014 was cancelled.

**E MINUTES OF THE CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Minutes of the meeting of the Closure of Accounts Committee held on 25 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**F NOTES OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the notes of the meeting of the Risk Management Board held on 6 August 2014 be received, for information.**

Please note that decisions are subject to a call-in period of 3 working days following publication Policy Committee Minutes: Version 1.0 Publication Date: 25 November 2014

## **G NOTES OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the notes of the meeting of the Risk Management Board held on 14 October 2014 be received, for information.**

## **2 ANNUAL REFRESH OF CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2014**

The Corporate Programme Manager introduced this report which highlighted the proposed changes to the Service's Corporate Risk Management Framework for approval by Members. She advised that the Service's Framework was reviewed and updated on an annual basis to ensure it remained current and reflected internal and external changes.

The Corporate Programme Manager explained that the Framework was extensively reviewed in 2012 and, as a result, Risk Management Board had agreed that a light touch approach would be appropriate for 2013. A similar light touch approach was proposed for 2014 with a more comprehensive refresh planned for 2015. This would ensure that Officers who were undertaking the risk champion role, which was relaunched in September 2014, would have the opportunity to become familiar with the system, processes and framework and would be in a position to contribute to a full refresh of the framework in 2015. The comprehensive refresh would also include assurance that the links between risk management and the Authority's new insurance arrangements were fully embedded.

The key changes to the document were summarised in the report and the Corporate Programme Manager explained that proposed changes were minor and were highlighted in red in the draft document. She commented that the updates included the changes to the risk champion role and also that thematic risk owners would be the Chair of the relevant working group, where possible.

Members were informed that the Service had won the Enterprise Risk Management Strategy of the Year award from the Institute of Risk Management against competition from companies in all industries and sectors across the UK. The Deputy Chair and Head of Performance, Planning and Communications had attended the awards ceremony in London to collect the award on behalf of the Service. Members congratulated Officers on this achievement and requested that their thanks be passed on to all the staff involved.

The Member Risk Champions, who sat on the Risk Management Board, commented that the achievement emphasised the importance of risk management to the Service and demonstrated that the process was embedded in the organisation.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the refreshed Corporate Risk Management Framework 2014 be approved.**

**3 TREASURY MANAGEMENT – MID YEAR REPORT**

The Head of Finance introduced this report which updated Members on the Authority's performance against its Treasury Management Strategy, which had been approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

The report provided information on the current position in respect of the Authority's treasury portfolio which included long term borrowing and investments. The Head of Finance explained that there was an overall increase of £7.2m on the net position, from the balance as at 31 March 2014, and the main reason for the increase was the receipt of grants in advance. He explained that this comprised capital grants of £3m, which would support the costs of the ERP and therefore had not yet been spent, and the top up grant for the pension fund account of around £8m approximately half of which had been spent to date.

The Head of Finance drew Members attention to the continuing challenges that the Authority faced in relation to investments and the report provided details of the limits for investments with individual counterparties and the Authority's cash investments as at 30 September 2014. He explained that there had been no change in the Authority's borrowing position in the first half of the year and officers were reviewing the long-term borrowing position. This review would include the feasibility of premature debt repayment and also would consider whether there were any advantages in borrowing in advance of capital spend.

Members thanked the Head of Finance and his team and noted that the Authority's Treasury Management was carried out in partnership with Warrington Borough Council. The Finance Member Champions commented that they were satisfied with the report and the Authority's approach to Treasury Management.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the mid-year treasury management report be noted.**

**4 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2014-2020**

The Environment, Energy and Engineering Officer attended the meeting and presented this report to Members. The report sought Member approval for the Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2014-2020 which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Strategy had been developed to ensure that the Service attained its 40% carbon reduction target by 2020 and minimised the environmental impacts whilst promoting a more sustainable approach throughout the organisation. The Environment, Energy and Engineering Officer informed Members that the key driving factors behind the strategy were the financial and legislative requirements, the climate change agenda and corporate social responsibility. She explained that the Strategy included the implementation of annual energy efficiency and sustainability projects which would contribute towards the Service's carbon reduction target from one of the five key areas detailed in the report. She concluded that there would be an environment and sustainability update issued at the beginning of each financial year which would be submitted to the Performance and Overview Committee to provide information on progress made on projects that contributed towards the Service's 40% carbon reduction target.

Members queried when the projected target date was to achieve the 40% reduction and also if the target would be stretched if it was met early. The Environment, Energy and Engineering Officer explained that all projects were currently on target and there would be a further report in April 2015 which would provide an update on progress. She also commented that it was important to consider the implications of increasing the number of stations and the affect that this would have on achievement of the target.

Members discussed the current year's projects which included replacement of lighting and the installation of a biomass boiler at HQ. It was noted that Members would like the opportunity to see the new boiler once it was fully operational.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Environment and Sustainability Strategy 2014-2020 be approved.**

**PART 2 – BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE**

**NONE**