

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

29 April 2010

Present:-

Councillors Gordon (Chair), Hughes OBE, Smith, Turner, Woodman and Yeomans

In attendance:-

Councillor Healey (as an observer)

***RC/26. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2010 be signed as a correct record.

***RC/27. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had any personal/personal and prejudicial interests in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and to declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

***RC/28. Financial Performance Report 2009/10**

The Committee received for information a report of the Treasurer (RC/10/8) that provided an update on the following matters:

- Revenue budget monitoring position for the current financial year based upon spending to the end of March 2010 against the approved Revenue Budget for 2009/10;
- Performance against the 2009/10 capital budget and prudential indicators;
- Forecast performance against other financial targets for 2009/10.

At this stage, projections indicated that revenue spending was £0.312million less than budget, equivalent to 0.43% of the total budget. There was no recommendation made at this stage in terms of potential utilisation of the underspend pending the outcome of the final outturn which would be reported to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 28 May 2010.

Reference was made to paragraph 3.3 of the report (RC/10/8) which set out details of the financial impact of the Employment Tribunal case under the Part-Time Workers (Less than Favourable Working Conditions) Regulations. This ruled in favour of retained firefighters in respect of unequal treatment with wholetime staff in relation to access to pension and sickness absence rights. Whilst the exact cost of settlement for this Authority was not known at this stage, provision had already been made for £0.497million to be set aside to cover this liability within the provisional outturn position.

In view of the uncertainty in respect of the impact of the final settlement on the Authority, it was suggested that, if this was in excess of the existing provision, this should be taken from the forecast underspend in 2009/10 and that it should be recommended to the Authority that provision be set aside accordingly.

Councillor Smith proposed (and was seconded by Councillor Yeomans) that:

“it be recommended to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority that, if the impact of the final settlement as a result of the Employment Tribunal case under the Part-Time Workers (Less than Favourable Working Conditions) Regulations was in excess of the existing provision made by the Authority (£0.497million), this should be taken from the forecast underspend on the 2009/10 Revenue Budget and the provision be increased accordingly”.

Upon a vote, this was carried unanimously.

The Committee noted that it had been envisaged that closure of the accounts would be completed on the basis of estimates but that following discussion with the auditors, it had been agreed that the actual figures should be used. Councillor Yeomans drew attention to the new International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and enquired as to whether training was to be provided for Members of the Committee, given their responsibility to sign off the final statement of accounts. The Principal Finance Manager replied that the Authority had a duty to ensure that Members made informed decisions and therefore, training would be considered at the appropriate time. It was agreed that this should be instigated in due course.

RESOLVED

- (a) That it be recommended to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority that, if the impact of the final settlement as a result of the Employment Tribunal case under the Part-Time Workers (Less than Favourable Working Conditions) Regulations was in excess of the existing provision made by the Authority (£0.497million), this should be taken from the forecast underspend on the 2009/10 Revenue Budget and the provision be increased accordingly”.
- (b) That training be provided for the Committee in respect of IFRS in due course;
- (c) Subject to (a) and (b) above, the report and recommendations therein be noted.

***RC/29. Debt Recovery Procedure**

The Committee received for information a report of the Treasurer (RC/10/9) that set out details of the procedure adopted by the Service for the recovery of outstanding debts, together with information in respect of those debts that may be subject to write-off.

Members of the Committee expressed the view that more information should have been included within the report, such as the time from which debts had started to accrue. In addition, the question was raised in respect of how much consideration would be given before credit was extended to former debtors of the Service and whether interest could be charged on outstanding debt.

A further report was requested setting out how the position in respect of debt was progressing and covering the points raised above. The Clerk indicated that a further report covering the points raised would be submitted in due course.

*** DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.53hours