



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 31 MARCH 2006

PRESENT: **CHAIRMAN**
Councillor R Payne – Hartlepool Borough Council
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL:
Councillors Cambridge, Waller
MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL:-
Councillors Biswas, Clark, Jones, Mawston, Pearson, Porley
REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:-
Councillors Blott, Cooney, Dunning, Forster, Jackson, Walker
STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:-
Councillors Leonard, O'Donnell, Salt, Woodhead
PROPER OFFICERS:-
Clerk, Legal Adviser, Treasurer
FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS:-
Chief Fire Officer, Executive Director,
Director of Operations and Community Safety
BY INVITATION:-
Steve Watson, FBU

APOLOGIES Councillor Flintoff - Hartlepool
FOR Councillor Roberts, Smith – Stockton on Tees
ABSENCE

120. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Ordinary meetings held on 27 January 2006 and the 10 February 2006, and the Special Meeting held on 24 March 2006 be confirmed.

121. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Tender Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2006, and the minutes of the Standard Committee Meeting held on 7 February 2006 be confirmed.

122. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING – 17 MARCH 2006

122.1 RMB – ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members of the outcome of the work programme of the RMB and presented, for approval, in principle, a revised organisation development plan and work programme for the RMB which would enhance the ability of the RMB to deliver on the six key strategic policy issues contained within the Framework Document.

122.1 REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD – ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND WORK PROGRAMME continued

The Chief Fire Officer referred Members to the ‘vision’ at Appendix 3 of the RMB report and emphasised the importance of partnership working and advised Members of the re-prioritisation, definition and strategic outcomes of the work streams outlined in paragraph 2.7 of the RMB report. He reassured Members that any information/reports delivered within the RMB that required resources or delegated powers would be brought to the Authority for their consideration prior to the RMB. He also asked that Members consider the recommendation to appoint a Regional Programme Manager to manage the overall process and to achieve the enhancement to the strategic planning, delivery and risk and performance management of the key strategic issues and approve the funding for a this post on an equal basis i.e. circa £12,000 per Authority. Members were also asked to approve in principle, the establishment of a Chief Officers’ Executive Board to undertake specific duties. Such meetings would also be attended by the Clerk and Finance Officer if necessary.

Councillor Pearson strongly objected to the funding for a Regional Project Manager and felt that this could be found within the RMB budget and should not require additional funding from local Fire Authorities. A lengthy discussion ensued where Members discussed partnership working within the region.

Members discussed at length the establishment of an Executive Board of Chief Officers, the proposed appointment of a Regional Programme Manager and the proposed vision. A vote was taken on the approval of the RMB recommendations with 9 votes for and 8 against.

RESOLVED – that Members approved the RMB recommendations as follows:

- (i) **the vision as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report.**
- (ii) **the re-prioritisation, definition and strategic outcomes of the work streams as outlined in paragraph 2.7 of the report.**
- (iii) **the establishment of an Executive Board of Chief Officers in principle.**
- (iv) **the appointment of a Regional Programme Manager.**
- (v) **that each constituent Fire Authority be recommended to approve the funding for a regional programme manager on an equal basis i.e. circa £12,000 per authority; and**
- (vi) **to receive regular reports from the Chief Officers regarding progress against the agreed strategic outcomes.**

122.2 REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD - REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

The Chief Fire Officer outlined the following reports which were for Members information: Minutes of 20 January 2006, Access to Information – Changes to Legislation and New Dimension Resilience Programme – Update Report.

RESOLVED – that the minutes and reports as outlined be noted.

123. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT – THIRD QUARTER 2005/06

The Executive Director provided Members with a summary of the Brigade’s quarterly performance against Best Value and Home Office Indicators up to December 2005. He advised Members that the Third Quarter Performance Summary report 2005/2006 had been considered at the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 March 2006. He highlighted that the Brigade was exceeding its targets against the Indicators in all but the following three areas: Total Fire Calls which were underperforming by 9.4%, Total Deliberate Fires which were underperforming by 13.4% and Deliberate F3 (mainly rubbish) fires were underperforming by 24.2% against target.

Councillor Pearson enquired as to what support had been given to the Firefighter’s who had attended the recent fires where fatalities had occurred. The Executive Director informed Members that following such incidences an operational debrief would be held with the firefighters discussing what had happened before, after and during the incident and Occupational Health would also become involved to offer a confidential counselling service.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

124. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

124.1 CFA COMMUNITY PLAN 2006/2007

The Executive Director presented Members with a Draft version of the Fire Service Community Plan 2006-2007 which was attached to the report at Appendix 1. He sought Members approval to publish the Cleveland Fire Authority Draft Service Community Plan 2006-2007. The Cleveland Fire Authority, Draft Fire Service Community Plan followed National good practice by combining various Authority Plans into one document for publication to improve communication and minimise costs. The three plans are as follows: Cleveland Fire Authority's Strategic Plan 2005/08; the Best Value Performance Plan (subject to validation of projected Best Value Indicators In June 2006); and the Safety Improvement Plan (the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan Year 3 Action Plan 2006-2007). Members agreed to approve the Community Plan on condition that the proposal for the Headland station be amended to reflect the agreed recommendation. Councillor Woodhead also reported that his name was missing from the report.

RESOLVED - that Members approved the Cleveland Fire Authority, "Fire Service Community Plan 2006-2007" on the understanding that the proposal for the Headland be amended as agreed to remain unchanged at the present time.

124.2 REVIEW OF CHARGES 2006/2007

The Executive Director advised Members of the way in which the Brigade's Scale of Charges is currently structured and drew their attention to the proposed scale of Charges to operate from the 1st April 2006. He sought Members approval of the proposals as set out in the attached Appendices to the report.

The Executive Director informed Members that each element of discretionary service provided by the Brigade for which a charge is to be made during 2006/2007 has, therefore, been assessed separately in the interest of public safety, revenue maximisation, and compliance with the Act. In addition a pricing and charging structure that reflected the full cost recovery, in providing training to organisations other than the Brigade, had been implemented for 2006/07. Taking account of previous year's trends and known variables, it was estimated that the combined effects of the revised charges would be to increase the Brigade's budgeted income by approximately £2,547 an average of 0.77%.

RESOLVED – that Members approved the proposals set out in the attached Appendices 1 and 3 to the report, to take effect from the 1st April 2006.

124.3 INFORMATION PACK NO. CFA 61 – MARCH 2006

- 124.3.1 Fire Brigades National Employers Circulars
- 124.3.2 Fire Service Circulars
- 124.3.3 Loss of Control Mobilisation System & Associated Costs – 3 March 2006
- 124.3.4 Freedom of Information Act – Annual Statistical Report 2005
- 124.3.5 Community Awards – 13 July 2006
- 124.3.6 Extension of Banking Contract
- 124.3.7 Proposed Extension of Treasury Management Advice Contract

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

125. REPORTS OF THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

125.1 UPDATE ON LOCAL SAFER PARTNERSHIPS

The Clerk advised Members on the representation on local Safety Partnership Forums and Boards and the work being undertaken within the four local Councils Safer Partnerships. He referred to the Annual Cleveland Fire Authority Meeting on 3 June 2005 when it had been resolved that Councillor Waller, Councillor Porley, Councillor Mrs Forster and Councillor Leonard be the representative for their local Authority Crime and Disorder Partnerships. Councillor Waller was also appointed to the Local Strategic Partnership Board in December 2005. The Clerk also acknowledged that Members had found the scheduled CDRP briefings with Officers beneficial and informative.

125.1 UPDATE ON LOCAL SAFER PARTNERSHIPS continued

Councillor Pearson enquired as to why there had been no minority party representatives chosen for the Crime and Disorder Partnerships. The Clerk replied that it was Members responsibility to chose representatives and this had been done at the Cleveland Fire Authority meeting in June 2005.

RESOLVED – Members noted the report.

125.2 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2006/2007

The Clerk sought Members views regarding the Member Development Programme 2006/07 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report. He also sought approval to delegate the selection of internal and external training courses and providers within the approved Member Training budget to the Head of Democratic and Member Services in consultation with the Clerk. He stated that such a budget would enable the deployment of funds specifically to meet Member training requirements. The Clerk confirmed that 22 Members had been interviewed and completed their Member Development Plans and submitted their individual training requests. A copy of the Member Development Programme 2006/07 was attached at Appendix 2 and 3 of the report. The Clerk stated that this evidence of Member Development training would be beneficial at the next inspection of the Audit Commission.

RESOLVED –

- (i) **that Members approved the Member Development Programme for 2006/07.**
- (ii) **that Members approved the principle of a structured Member Development Training programme.**
- (iii) **that Members agreed to delegate the selection of internal and external training courses and providers within the approved Member Training budget to the Head of Democratic and Member Services in consultation with the Clerk.**

125.3 POLICY ON PAYMENTS TO SCRUTINY INTERVIEWEES

The Clerk informed Members of the Policy Committee recommendations regarding the payment of costs and/or expenses to those attending the Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Committee for interview. He sought Members views on the proposed policy on payments to external persons attending the Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Committee as outlined at Appendix A and asked that they consider the proposed statement, as outlined at Appendix 1, on the payment of expenses and/or costs which will be included as part of any information pack, guidance notes or letter sent to any person(s), external to the Authority, appearing at a Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (i) **that Members approved the proposed policy on payments to external persons attending the Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Committee as outlined at Appendix A.**
- (ii) **that Members approved the proposed statement, outlined at Appendix 1, on the payment of expenses and/or costs be included as part of any information pack, guidance notes or letter sent to any person(s), external to the Authority, who has agreed to appear at a Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Committee.**

125.4 REGIONAL FIRE CONFERENCE – 25 MAY 2006

The Clerk sought Members wishes regarding attendance at the Regional Fire Conference on 25 May 2006 at York. The one day Conference would open with a keynote speech from Professor Beverley Alimo-Metcalf, one of the world's leading authority speakers on transformational leadership. Members discussed the Authority representation at the Fire Conference agreeing that the Chair, Vice Chair and one minority group Member attend.

RESOLVED – that Members agreed that the attendance at the Regional Fire Conference on the 25 May 2006 at York be the Chair, Vice Chair and one minority party Member.

125.5 CLERKS INFORMATION PACK – MARCH 2006

125.5.1 Improvement Partnership for North East Local Government.

125.5.2 Member Attendances at Conferences.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

126 REPORTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER TO THE AUTHORITY

126.1 ACCESS TO INFORMATION – VARIATION OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Legal Adviser notified Members of amendments to the rules relating to exempt information as part of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order that came into force on 1st March 2006. He advised members that the report was for noting under the statutory requirements. He summarised for Members that the rules substituted the previous 15 paragraphs in schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, with 7 categories more simply phrased to simplify the conditions which regulated the application of categories and to widen the rights of Members to reports etc.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the amendments to the rules relating to exempt information as part of the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order that came into force on 1st March 2006.

126.2 STANDARDS AND PARTNERS – CLAUSE INCLUSION IN CONTRACT DOCUMENTATION

The Legal Adviser sought Members approval of a draft paper entitled “Standards and Partners” be included in relevant contract documentation, service level agreements and other arrangements with external bodies. He advised Members that the paper was intended to be issued to parties such as contractors, outside agencies and others with whom the Authority have dealings in the provision of their services which would seek to underline the standards to which the Authority subscribes and which guide Members and Officers. The paper had been considered by the Standards Committee on the 7 February 2006 who had suggested including a clause to the statement which referred to sub-contractors.

RESOLVED – that Members approved the paper “Standards and Partners” for inclusion in relevant contract documentation, service level agreements and other arrangements with external bodies.

127. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED - “That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 7, 9, 10 & 11 of Schedule 12A to the Act namely information relating to; a particular employee, former employee or applicant to become an employee of, or a particular office-holder, former office-holder or applicant to become an office-holder under the authority; information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (other than the Authority); any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition/disposal of property or the supply of goods or services; the identity of the Authority (as well as of any other person, by virtue of paragraph 7 above) as the person offering any particular tender for a contract for the supply of goods and services; information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees, of, or office-holders under, the Authority.”

128. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of Proceedings of the Cleveland Fire Authority Meeting held on 27 January 2006 and 10 February 2006 be confirmed.

129. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of Tender Committee – 27 January 2006 be confirmed.

130. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

130.1 REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD – 17 March 2006

RESOLVED – that the minutes of 20 January 2006 Part II be noted.

131. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

131.1 FATAL FIRE REPORTS

The Director of Operations briefed Members on two recent fire fatalities.

Members commended the Firefighters and Officers for the outstanding work being done.

RESOLVED – that Members noted the reports.

**COUNCILLOR ROBBIE PAYNE
CHAIRMAN**