



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2007

- PRESENT:** **VICE -CHAIRMAN**
Councillor J Jones –Middlesbrough Council
- HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL:**
Councillors Payne, Waller
- MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Biswas, Porley
- REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Briggs, Cooney, Smith, Walker
- STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Brown, Kirton, O'Donnell, Roberts, Salt, Woodhead
- PROPER OFFICERS:-**
Clerk, Deputy Legal Adviser, Treasurer
- FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS:-**
Chief Fire Officer, Executive Director,
- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Councillor B Forster – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Councillor G Dunning – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Councillor T Mawston – Middlesbrough Council
Counillor G Clark – Middlesbrough Council
Councillor S Allison – Hartlepool Borough Council
Councillor G Henery – Hartlepool Borough Council

The Vice-Chairman informed members that the Chairman Councillor Mrs Brenda Forster was unable to attend due to a broken ankle and passed on her thanks to Members for their best wishes.

- 127 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2006.**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Meeting held on 24 November 2006 be confirmed

- 128 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:- EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 1 DECEMBER 2006, 15 DECEMBER 2006; POLICY COMMITTEE – 5 JANUARY 2007**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Executive Committee Meetings held on 1 December 2006 and 15 December 2006 and the Policy Committee on 5 January 2007, be confirmed.

129 TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS SENT TO THE CHAIRMAN OR CLERK TO AUTHORITY

The Vice Chair reported that the Chairman had received a letter of thanks from Chief Fire Officer Des Pritchard from East Sussex following receipt of the Authority's letter of condolence following the tragic deaths of two firefighters.

The Vice-Chairman informed members that Councillor Gordon Henery had replaced Councillor Victor Tumilty and wished to place on record his thanks to Councillor Tumilty for his contribution in 2006/07.

130 TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING – 1 DECEMBER 2006

130.1 CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE FUNDING OF FIREBUY LIMITED

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members on the consultation exercise being carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the future funding of Firebuy Limited. He reported that the consultation paper sets out two options for collecting contributions from FRA's which are to top slice from RSG or the payment of subscriptions, and that there would be a different impact on different authorities depending on which option they chose.

RESOLVED – that further clarification be sought as to the role and function of the RMB in national procurement strategy and Firebuy in general.

130.2 FIRECONTROL/FIRELINK PROJECT UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the Regional Control Centre (RCC) and FIRELink projects and sought Members approval for the financial resources in 2007/08.

Councillor Payne enquired if our staff relocation to the RCC was included in the original case and also raised the issue of what would happen to any excess staff once our Control Room transferred to the RCC. The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that each Authority would contribute to staff wages and that Staff costs were already built into the budgetary plans. He reported that our Control Staff carry out additional duties e.g. Home Fire Risk Assessment bookings and that when transferred the RCC will have the capability of looking after other controls. The Executive Director reported that the Authority hoped to transfer any excess staff into other parts of the Authority and various options would be offered to them at that time. Councillor Payne requested that all correspondence to LACC Directors be sent by post in future.

RESOLVED –

- (i) that a response be made to the draft final business case.**
- (ii) that subject to confirmation of DCLG funding, options be submitted against each of these areas to the RMB and its constituent Fire and Rescue Authorities for consideration and approval.**
- (iii) that all correspondence to LACC Directors be sent by post.**

130.3 RMB BUDGET & CONSTITUENT AUTHORITY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2007/08 AND CHANGE TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the RMB Treasurer had advised that each of the constituent authorities were of the view that the present arrangements were efficient and should continue and that to change the basis could lead to an increase in administration costs. He also informed members that as a result of the change of the RMB Treasurer, it was proposed that the accounts be maintained in accordance with the Financial Regulations of Cleveland Fire Authority.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the current arrangements for the RMB Budget continue during 2007/08.**
- (ii) that contributions per constituent authority be set at £12,000 for 2007/08**
- (iii) that approval be given to the change in Financial Regulations of the RMB**

130.4 RMB – FIRE AND RESCUE NOMINATION TO THE MEMBER REVIEW GROUP FOR IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY IN THE NORTH EAST

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the RMB considered a request from ANEC to nominate a Member of the RMB to service on a small Member Review Group, in order that FRS perspectives and views are able to be represented and reflected. The Member Review Group is being established to provide an overview, to monitor progress and to generally advise the Association on the improvement and efficiency agenda.

RESOLVED – that an RMB members be nominated to the Member Review Group.

130.5 RMB REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the RMB meeting held on 6 October 2006 be noted.

131 TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

131.1 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2007/08 CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Executive Director appraised Members of the Audit Commission's Performance Framework Consultation Document and the proposed authority's formal response which outlined the areas of concern relating to the frameworks and its implications to this Authority.

RESOLVED –

- (i) that contents and proposals of the draft FRS Performance Framework for 2007/08 be noted.**
- (ii) that Members recognised the implications and issues arising from the Framework and considered the role of scrutiny in supporting the achievements of best outcome for the Authority.**
- (iii) that the contents of the formal response to the Audit Commission be approved.**
- (iv) that members will proactively engage to raise political and local awareness of the potential negative impacts of the proposed framework as it is applied to Cleveland Fire Authority.**

131.2 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Executive Director advised Members that the Asset Management Plan had been presented to the Policy Committee on 8 September 2006 and Members had requested a number of updates and amendments to the Plan. The amendments had been re-presented to the Policy Committee on 5 January 2007 and the Policy Committee now recommended the Asset Management Plan for approval.

RESOLVED – that the Asset Management Plan be approved.

131.3 PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

The Executive Director informed Members that the Partnership Framework Document had been presented to the Policy Committee on 5 January 2007. He reported that if approved the Authority would be able to deliver a complex, effective and efficient partnership methodology which would assist in maximising the Authority's bid income and reduce the organisations capability within Local Area Agreements.

Councillor Payne queried whether the Fire Authority had any plans to go into Partnership with Planning Departments. Councillor Waller added that the Police Authority had recently been involved with the planning and architectural design of new buildings to out design any potential areas which may attract crime and were there any plans for the Fire Authority to input at the same stage to out design fire risks, and would this be a more beneficial approach to fire prevention? The Executive Director informed Members that he currently had reservations in this area as a result of the Brigade enforcement role under the Regulation Reform Order.

RESOLVED –

- (i) that the Members approved the Partnership Framework Document as outlined at Appendix 1 of the report.**
- (ii) that the Brigade involvement in the initial architectural and design stages be investigated further.**

131.4 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY AND BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

The Executive Director informed Members that the Equality & Diversity and Bullying & Harassment Policies had been revised to meet changes in legislation, policy, guidance and procedure and sought Members approval to these revised policies as outlined at Appendix 1 and 2.

Councillor Biswas commented on the Bullying & Harassment Policy, highlighting the difficulty in proving bullying, however he congratulated the Fire Authority in its efforts in providing an all round policy.

RESOLVED – that the Equality & Diversity and Bullying & Harassment Policies as outlined at Appendix 1 and 2 be approved.

131.5 CONSULTATION ON EXTENSION OF CHARGING ORDER

The Executive Director informed Members that the power to trade under Order 2307 was given to those Authorities who had expressed an interest comes to an end on 1 October 2007 and DCLG are seeking stakeholders opinions on extending the charging regime and seeking what level of support there is for undertaking further research on this (see appendix 1). He informed Members that the Policy Committee had recommended that the Authority continue to only charge for specific services and not to seek Power to Trade.

RESOLVED - that the Authority continue to only charge for specific services and agreed not to seek Power to Trade.

131.6 CLEVELAND FIRE SUPPORT NETWORK

The Executive Director appraised Members of the proposed activities of the Cleveland Fire Support Network and the anticipated involvement and relationships which are to be developed between Brigade Officers and the Network's volunteers. He advised Members of the requirement to have the Network registered as a charity and that there would be an initial recruitment of 20 volunteers. He reported that identification of suitable premises within the community, establishment of a Trustees Board and identifying partners and sources of funding was continuing.

RESOLVED –

- (i) that the Report be noted.
- (ii) that those actions taken to date by the Brigade Officers be approved.
- (iii) that the future action required to develop this initiative as outlined within the report, be endorsed.
- (iv) that the Executive Director provide future Reports on the progress of the development of the Network to the Fire Authority's Scrutiny Committee
- (v) that the appointment of the Chair of Cleveland Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer and the Executive Director to the Trust Board (for the purposes also of the Brigade Officers terms and conditions) be approved.

131.7 CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE FUNDING OF FIREBUY

The Executive Director informed Members of the Consultation on the Future of Firebuy Report, paragraph 6 and the Authority's suggested responses to the ten questions of the consultation exercise undertaken by the Department for the Communities and Local Government (DCLG). He sought approval with Members to instruct the Chief Fire Officer to formulate and submit a response on behalf of the Cleveland Fire Authority.

RESOLVED – that the Chief Fire Officer formulate and submit a response on behalf of the Authority as outlined at paragraph 6 to the report.

131.8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS INFORMATION PACK NO. 66

- 131.8.1 Fire and Rescue Circulars
- 131.8.2 National Joint Circulars

RESOLVED – that the report be noted

**132 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY SCRUTINY CHAIR
Safety Improvement Plan 2006/07 (IRMP3) Monitoring Proposals**

Councillor Cooney advised Members of the Service Delivery Scrutiny Committee's agreement to a revision for the availability of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the Safety Improvement Plan (SIP) 2006/07 (IRMP 3), and an amalgamation of the original three phases of the SIP into one phase.

RESOLVED – that Members note the report content

**133 REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
133.1 EVALUATION OF AFTER THE FIRE QUALITY OF SERVICE SURVEY**

Councillor Porley informed Members that following the 15 December 2006 meeting, Members had asked that the evaluation of the After Fire Quality service Survey be presented to all the Authority members for their information.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

133.2 PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT – APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2006

Councillor Porley provided Members with a provisional summary of the Brigade's second Quarter performance against Best Value and IRMP Strategic Action Plans for 2006/07, informing Members that Bonfire Night had an impact on figures. The Executive Director added that deliberate F3 Fires were over target by 13% and that he would also be attending a meeting at Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council on the 12th February 2007 to discuss F3 fires and their prevention. The Executive Director also informed Members that although the sickness figures were well above target, that this was due to an unusual increase in longterm sickness.

RESOLVED – that the position up to 30th October 2006 be noted

133.3 PROGRESS AGAINST REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGETS 2006/07

Councillor Porley informed Members of the progress against Expenditure & Income Budgets up to 31st October 2006. The overall position for the first seven months of the financial year shows a favourable variance of £377,000. Appendix 1 summarises the variances between actual and expected expenditure and income. He also informed Members of the projected outturn which at the time is expected to produce an underspend of circa £500,000.

RESOLVED – that the position up to 30th October 2006 be noted

134 TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

134.1 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

The Vice Chair welcomed Eleanor Haywood, Assistant Director of the North East Employers Organisation who outlined the Member Development Charter to enable the authority to consider making a Declaration of Commitment to the Member Development Charter.

Councillor Waller expressed his concerns that if Fire Authority's and Local Authority's take on board the Member Development Charter there would be a danger of a clash in training and would Members be expected to duplicate training even if they had already received it from a different Authority. Eleanor Haywood agreed to look into the duplicity of members training between Fire Authorities and Borough Councils.

RESOLVED – that the Member Development Charter be referred to the Member Development Group for further consideration and brought back to a future CFA meeting.

134.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Clerk informed Members of the intention to establish a Member Development Group comprising of 7 Members (4:1:1:1) to meet on an ad hoc basis. The group will enable Members to be further involved in the establishment, monitoring and evaluation of the Member Development strategies. The terms of reference were to be established and presented to a future Authority meeting.

RESOLVED – that a Member Development Group be established comprising of 7 Members (4:1:1:1).

134.3 CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS 2007/08

The Clerk sought approval of the Cleveland Fire Authority Meetings for 2007/08 for and sought Members views regarding the time and venues of the meetings. Councillor Waller informed Members that at the time of establishing the CFA, no other Councils met on a Friday and although this had now changed, council diaries are so full it would be a difficult to ascertain when all Councillors would be free at the same time. Councillor Kirton advised that no annual holiday breaks were included within the authority meeting as was the practice in local councils. The majority of Members agreed that the time day and venue should remain as outlined but members agreed this should be referred to the Member Development Group for further consideration.

RESOLVED – that the day, time, venue and possible recess regarding the Fire Authority Meetings be referred to the member development group for further discussion.

134.4 EMBRACING DIVERSITY EVENT – 28TH FEBRUARY 2007

The Clerk sought Members wishes regarding attendance at the Embracing Diversity Event on the 28th February 2007 at the Fire Service College.

RESOLVED – that Members contact the Head of Democratic & Member Services by 5th February if they wish to attend the Embracing Diversity Event

134.5 FIRE & RESCUE CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION – 22-24 MAY 2007

The Clerk sought Members wishes regarding attendance at the Fire & Rescue Conference & Exhibition 22-24 May 2007 at Birmingham.

Councillor Waller expressed concern at the timing of the conference due to the impending Elections and uncertainty of Members availability.

RESOLVED – that the Chair, Vice Chair and one Minority member or substitutes attend the Fire and Rescue Conference and Exhibition in Birmingham on 22-24 may 2007.

134.6 GENDER EQUALITY DUTY – 30 JANUARY 2007

The Clerk sought Members wishes in respect of the Equality and Diversity member Champions attendance at the LGA/EOC/IDeA Conference on Gender Equality in London on 30 January 2007.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Biswas attend the Gender Equality Duty Seminar on 30 January 2007 in London.

134.7 CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY'S INFORMATION PACK

RESOLVED – that the report be noted

135 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

135.1 DISCRETIONARY POLICY STATEMENT – LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) REGULATIONS 1997 – AS AMENDED

The Treasurer informed Members of the implications of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1977 (LGPS) as amended in Appendix 1. The LGPS regulations 1997 gives employers greater scope for local decision making and Cleveland Fire Authority officers have recently reviewed all its Discretionary Policies and this statement is applicable to all employees who are eligible to be members of the Local Government pension Scheme and will come into effect one month after the policy statement is approved.

RESOLVED – that the key discretionary policies contained within the Discretionary Policy Statement as outlined at Appendix 1 be approved.

136 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED – Members passed the following resolution “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 declined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of schedule 12A to the Act namely information regarding an individual; namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)”.

137 TO CONFIRM THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF COMMITTEES: - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 1 DECEMBER 2006 AND 15 DECEMBER 2006

RESOLVED – that the confidential minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 1 December 2006 and 15 December 2006 be confirmed.

138 RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

138.1 REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING – 1 DECEMBER 2006 NEFRA PROJECT: REPORT ON PROGRESS AND CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN JONES
VICE CHAIR**