



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2007

- PRESENT:** **VICE -CHAIRMAN**
Councillor J Jones –Middlesbrough Council
- HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL:**
Councillors Allison, Waller
- MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Biswas, Clark, Mawston, Pearson, Porley
- REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Briggs, Cooney, Dunning
- STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Kirton, O'Donnell, Roberts, Salt,
- PROPER OFFICERS:-**
Clerk, Treasurer
- FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS:-**
Chief Fire Officer, Executive Director,
- APOLOGIES** Councillor R Payne – Hartlepool Borough Council
FOR Councillor G Henery – Hartlepool Borough Council
ABSENCE Councillor B Forster – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
 Councillor K Walker – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
 Councillor V Smith – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
 Councillor D Brown – Stockton Borough Council
 Councillor W Woodhead – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Councillor Pearson sent the Chairman her best wishes and a speedy recovery.

142 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE TREASURER

BUDGET STRATEGY 2007/2008 TO 2010/2011 AND 2007/2008 COUNCIL TAX LEVEL

The Treasurer advised Members that the outlook for public sector expenditure over the next few years was challenging and this position was reflected in the proposed budget strategy. He advised that the formula grant allocations for 2006/07 and 2007/08 brought forward a significant reduction in resources that will necessitate major changes but as a single purpose authority the CFA does not have the same opportunities to manage services and reduce costs as multi-purpose authorities. Furthermore the expectations and challenges within the Fire Service are increasing and Members need to ensure the Authority has the financial strength to respond to these challenges over the coming years. The Treasurer asked Members to consider the proposals within the Budget Strategy and advised Members that the Policy Committee had recommend a 4.5% increase which would result in a Band D Council Tax for 2007/2008 of £55.95. He reported that the Policy Committee had discounted a 4.95% increase as a result of notification of £88,000 surplus in the Collection Funds of the 4 constituent authorities.

142 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE TREASURER

BUDGET STRATEGY 2007/2008 TO 2010/2011 AND 2007/2008 COUNCIL TAX LEVEL (continued)

The Executive Director asked Members to consider a 4.9% Council Tax increase taking into account that Cleveland Fire Brigade is a high risk area with high deprivation especially in view of the reduction in grants from Central Government. He informed Members that there were mounting future pressures on the budget such as the 2003 pay agreement; the 2007 continuous personal development; £70,000 increase on the bill for pay protection on some staff; and the unknown cost of the Regional Control Centre replacement radio scheme. He reported that further investment was needed to continue our success and asked Member to approve a 4.9% increase rather than the proposed 4.5% which would generate an additional £42,000.

Councillor Roberts enquired what would happen with £42,000 should they agree the 4.9% increase and the Treasurer reported that the £42,000 would initially be placed in reserves and the Chief Fire Officer responded this would then be used for initiatives within the community.

Councillor Biswas stated that you cannot put a price on life, however, he did support the Treasurers proposals of 4.5%. Councillor Pearson agreed with the 4.5% rise adding that the Cleveland Fire Brigade were asking enough of the community of Cleveland and also took the opportunity to praise the work of the Firefighters. After a lengthy discussion Members unanimously approved a 4.5% increase for 2007/08.

RESOLVED –

- (i) that the proposed 2007/08 capital programme as detailed at Appendix A be approved.
- (ii) that the detailed prudential indicators identified at Appendix B be approved.
- (iii) that the phased use of balances over the four years commencing 2007/08 as detailed at paragraph 7.15 be approved.
- (iv) that a Band D Council Tax level for 2007/08 of £55.95 (a 4.5% increase on 2006/07) and supporting statutory calculations as detailed at Appendix F and the detailed revenue budget set out at Appendix D be approved.
- (v) that the following indicative Band D Council Tax levels for the following three years be approved:-
 - 2008/09 = £58.75
 - 2009/10 = £61.69
 - 2010/11 = £64.77

**COUNCILLOR JOHN JONES
VICE CHAIR**