



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 16 MARCH 2007

- PRESENT:**
- CHAIRMAN**
Councillor B Forster – Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
 - HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL:**
Councillors Allison, Henery, Waller
 - MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Biswas, Clark, Jones, Mawston, Porley
 - REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Briggs, Cooney, Walker
 - STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors Brown, Kirton, O'Donnell, Roberts, Salt, Woodhead
 - AUTHORITY OFFICER:-**
Head of Democratic and Member Services
 - FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS:-**
Executive Director, Director of Performance
- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- Councillor R Payne – Hartlepool Borough Council
 - Councillor H Pearson – Middlesbrough Council
 - Councillor V Smith – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
 - Councillor G Dunning – Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Henery to the Authority.

145 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

145.1 CONSULTATION ON THE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2007/08

The Executive Director informed Members that the Consultation Programme had been sufficiently extensive so as to enable any person or organisation, which may have had a legitimate interest in the Authority's proposals or may have been affected by those proposals, to express their views and that the scope of the consultation was proportionate to the nature and extent of the changes proposed and did not disadvantage any group or community served by the Authority. He reported that the Authority can demonstrate that adequate consultation had been undertaken and the responses collated and considered and that the Consultation Programme was based around a comprehensive Communication Plan which provided sufficient information to consultees to allow them to make informed decisions. The Communication Plan selected the most appropriate techniques for consultation and ensured that the subject matter was put into local context to improve understanding. A total of 161 staff and 15 public questionnaires were completed. 1779 questionnaires were completed through the Local Authorities Stakeholder panels and 110 responses were received through the 'Whatever it takes' initiative.

145.1 CONSULTATION ON THE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2007/08 continued

The Executive Director reported that the Authority consultation included the general public, business organisations, stakeholders and other emergency services and that the 12 week consultation began on 27 November 2006 and ended 18 February 2007. He reported that a wide variety of methods were used to encourage staff, stakeholders and members of the public to engage in consultation process which included a questionnaire distributed to stakeholders, staff and members of the public and the Whatever It Takes Questionnaire. Only two letters were received from stakeholders supporting the changes out of the 1779 distributed. 161 staff and 15 public questionnaires were completed and 110 responses out of 8000 were received through the 'Whatever It Takes' initiative.

The Executive Director informed Members that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had submitted a response to the Safety Improvement Plan and had expressed concerns about the introduction of the Medium Risk Band and whether this would change benchmark response times and whether fewer Firefighters would be sent to low risk F3 fires, as they carried the highest safety risk due to abuse. The Executive Director had assured the FBU that this does not mean a medium response and this was a positive indicator on the progress made by the Brigade in minimising risk when Cleveland has the highest level of risk in the country. He reported that there will be further consultation and specific proposals on the areas that are being reviewed.

Councillor Mawston commended the consultation process used this year and enquired as to why there was a difference in response between the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the staff road show.

Councillor Allison referred to paragraph 9.6 Public Consultation Responses, where comments suggested that the Fire Brigade work closer with partners to remove rubbish and graffiti. The Executive Director informed Members that this was an interesting comment and wondered whether we had not got across what the Fire Brigade do and its aims, but recognises that a broader involvement with partners from this Authority may be needed, rather than Firefighters actually collecting rubbish and removing graffiti. The Chairman reported that as refuse is now going to be collected once per fortnight would this impact on small rubbish fires which are an increasing problem for the Fire Brigade. The Executive Director informed Members that the Authority deemed climate change to be a higher risk, with hotter summers and wetter winters.

RESOLVED –

- (i) that Members note the content of the report and consider the implications to the Authority's Safety Improvement Plan 2007/08**
- (ii) that the proposals as set out in the Safety Improvement Plan 2007/08 be approved.**

145.2 (DRAFT) FIRE SERVICE COMMUNITY PLAN 2007 – 2008

The Executive Director informed Members that the Draft Fire Service Community Plan 2007/2008 included the Cleveland Fire Authority's Strategic Plan 2005/08, the Best Value Performance Plan (subject to validation of projected Best Value indicators in June 2007) and the Safety Improvement Plan (the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan Year 4 Action Plan 2007/2008) which had been recommended for approval by the Policy Committee. He informed members that The Local Government Act 1999 requires FRA's to prepare an annual Best Value Performance Plan which should provide information on the Authority's Service Review Programme, efficiency achievements, finances and performance against key indicators.

RESOLVED – that Members approve the Draft Fire Service Community Plan 2007-2008 be approved

146. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED - that under Section 100(A) (2) (3) 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 confidential information as defined in paragraph 3a, namely information furnished to the Authority by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public"

147. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman accepted a late report entitled 'Use of Resources & Direction of Travel Assessments 2006' which was discussed under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 due to an embargo

**COUNCILLOR BRENDA FORSTER JP
CHAIRMAN**