



---

# CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

---

## MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 30 MARCH 2007

---

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

It was with deep regret the Executive Director informed Members of the death of Firefighter Dougie Wright from Thornaby Fire Station on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2007. Dougie had been receiving treatment for cancer and had, infact returned to work following an operation earlier this year. Sadly, however, his illness returned and he died on Thursday morning. Dougie was 48 years old and had worked for the Brigade for thirty years, he leaves a wife Amanda and sons, Thomas and Adam. Mrs Wright has requested a formal Fire Service Funeral and this will be held at Stockton Parish Church, High Street, Stockton at 1.30pm on Wednesday 4 April at which Members were welcome to attend.

Members observed a minutes silence in memory of Firefighter Dougie Wright.

### 154 MINUTES

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Meeting held on 26 January 2007, 9 February 2007 and 16 March 2007 be confirmed**

## **155 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of Executive Committee 23 March 2007, Policy Committee 2 March 2007 and Standards Committee 6 March 2007 be confirmed**

## **156 REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING – 27 JANUARY 2007**

### **156.1 FiReControl/FIRELINK Project Update**

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members of the FiReControl/Firelink Project Update and informed Members of the RMB recommendations. He reported that the DCLG intend to provide grants for funding the set up costs of the regional local authority controlled company and any relevant ongoing costs of the company which occur before the end of cutover. The department expects funding to cover the net additional cost of advice to support decision making, RCC staff salaries prior to the RCC becoming operational, all accommodation costs for the RCC building and any other necessary activities dictated by the national project plan. DCLG will fund each RCC company, via a nominated authority.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the nominated Authorities are expected to administer the specific FRA grants from the DCLG i.e. £49,000 in financial year 2006/07 and £884,562 in financial year 2007/08 in respect of the aforementioned regional project team and RCC company costs and these amounts are currently credited to Cleveland Fire Authority. If Cleveland Fire Authority Members approve the RMB recommendation in respect of the nominated/host authority, some of these FRA grants may need redirecting to DDFRA. The Chief Fire Officer reported that Members would recall that at the RMB meeting held on 26 January 2007 it was agreed that Durham and Darlington would act as the “host” authority for the purpose of the lease agreement, subject to clarification and confirmation being received in respect of legal and financial matters (RMB minute no. 27 i-v refers).

### **RESOLVED –**

- (i) that Members considered and noted the recommendations for a) b) c) and f) of the RMB Report**
- (ii) that Members agreed to transferring the role of “Host Authority” to Durham & Darlington FRA**
- (iii) that Members receive further reports, as appropriate, prior to signing the RCC lease agreement**

### **156.2 RMB Fire and Rescue (FRS) National Framework – Discussion Forum**

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the RMB Fire and Rescue (FRS) National Framework – Discussion Forum Report and sought Members views on what the next National Framework Document should look like in relation to the future role, functions, constitution, work programme and financing of Regional Management Boards in order that these can be submitted to DCLG for consideration.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (i) that Members provide comments in relation to the review of the National Framework, with specific reference to the work of the RMB**
- (ii) that Members agree to submit those comments to the DCLG National Framework Discussion Forum for consideration**

**156.3 RMB Work Programme**

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the RMB Work Programme and updated Members on the progress of the work being undertaken under the auspices of the Regional Management Board (RMB) in relation to the strategic workstreams of Resilience, Human Resources and procurement.

**RESOLVED – that Members note the content of the report.**

**156.4 RMB Reports for Information**

The Chief Director informed Members of the RMB reports and minutes for noting

**RESOLVED – that Members note the Minutes and reports for information**

**157. REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**157.1 Review of Charges 2007/08**

The Executive Director informed Members of the Review of Charges 2007/2008 report and drew Members attention to the proposed Scale of Charges to operate from 1 April 2007. He reported that Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places constraints on Fire Authorities preventing them from levying charges for special services above the amount of full cost recovery as this would constitute unauthorised taxation and although the Fire Authority cannot charge in excess of the full cost, it may, at its discretion, charge less or nothing at all. Members discussed the various funding and new income opportunities available to the Authority.

**RESOLVED – that Members approve the proposals as set out in Appendices 1 and 3, to take effect from 1 April 2007**

**157.2 Strategic Plan 2005/06 to 2008/09 - Our Journey to Excellence**

The Executive Director informed Members that on 20 October 2006 the authority reviewed its annual priorities to set the focus for the next stage of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan was reviewed to incorporate the new priority areas for 2007/08 and the detail of the improvement action plans which progress the Authority toward achievement of its vision and aspirations for staff and local communities. He reported that in line with the Authority's approach to integrate key corporate plans, the Improvement Action Plan has been incorporated into the Strategic Plan 2005/6 - 2008/9. The Authority has also reviewed its Best Value Review Programme following its CPA and this was also included in the Improvement Action Plan.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) that Members approve the Authority's Strategic Plan 2005/6 – 2008/9.**
- (ii) that Members approve the Authority's Improvement Action Plans flowing out from the Plan for the next financial year, 2007/8, and the Best Value and Service Review Programme.**

**157.3 Best Value Performance Plan Summary Document**

The Executive Director appraised Members of the Best Value Performance Plan. The Summary Report had been formulated in line with Audit practice and guidelines and represents information already approved by the Authority within its Fire Service Community Plan 2007/08 at the Authority's meeting of 16 March 2007.

**RESOLVED – that Members note the Best Value Performance Plan Summary Document.**

**157.4 Executive Directors Information Pack No. 67**

- 157.4.1 Fire and Rescue Service Circulars
- 157.4.2 National Joint Circulars
- 157.4.3 Community Awards
- 157.4.4 Fire Incident – Alderwood Sheltered Housing
- 157.4.5 Occupational Health Contract
- 157.4.6 Freedom of Information Annual Report

**RESOLVED - that members note the report**

**158 REPORT OF THE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY CHAIR  
Performance Summary Report – April – December 2006**

Councillor Porley appraised Members of the provisional third quarter Performance Summary Report April – December 2006. He reported that the Authority is mainly on target with the strategy. Members discussed the introduction of an Arson predicted Computer System, which is 60 – 70% accurate and that the Police record arson in a different way to the Fire Authority as they do not treat deliberate fire setting as Arson.

**RESOLVED – that Members note the progress to date**

**159 REPORT OF THE DELEGATED POWERS WORKING PARTY  
Cleveland Fire Authority Delegation Scheme**

The Clerk to the Authority sought Members views on the CFA Governance Arrangements – Delegation Scheme, which had been considered by the Delegated Powers Working Party. He reported that two further reports were required regarding the involvement of Members regarding Appointment, Promotion and changes to Conditions of Service for Brigade staff and Officers and until these items were satisfactorily completed, existing delegation will continue for these functions.

The Clerk reported that approval for overseas travel for Brigade Managers was previously the Clerk in consultation with 3 Members and the Working Party had now changed this to all overseas travel by the Clerk in consultation with the Executive Committee Members

**RESOLVED – that the CFA Governance Arrangements Delegation Scheme be approved with the amendment of the Delegated of Overseas Travel to the Clerk in consultation with the Executive Committee.**

**160 TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

**160.1 Member Development Charter**

The Clerk informed Members that following the presentation of Eleanor Haywood from the North East Employers Organisation at the Authority Meeting on 26 January 2007, the Member Development Group had considered the implications of signing up to the Member Development Charter and had recommended its approval. Members agreed that Cleveland Fire Authority sign up to the Member Development Charter.

**RESOLVED – that Members agreed to sign up to the Member Development Charter.**

**160.2 Cleveland Fire Authority Meetings 2007/08**

The Clerk sought Members approval of the schedule of Cleveland Fire Authority Meetings for 2007/08 and reported that the Member Development Group had recommended that the Authority meetings remain on a Friday at the same time and venue and that a summer recess should not be included. They did however recommend that it would be appropriate to occasionally change the venue of some smaller committees if there was no cost to the Authority.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) that Members approved the Cleveland Fire Authority Meetings for 2007/08**
- (ii) that Members agree to the occasional change in venue for some committees, if there is no cost to the Authority**

**160.3 Remit of Committees/Development Group**

The Clerk sought Member views on the remit for the Member Development Charter and appraised Members of the recent revisions to the Executive Committee and the Appeal Committee.

**RESOLVED –**

- (i) that Members approved the Member Development Group Remit as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report.**
- (ii) that Members note the recent revisions to the Executive and Appeals Committee as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.**

**160.4 CFA Safer Partnership Representative Update**

The Clerk informed Members of the Fire Authority representation on the local Safety Partnership Forums and Boards and updated Members on the work being undertaken within the four local Councils Safer Partnerships. Each representative had found the quarterly briefings extremely informative, and similar key issues were found throughout the 4 districts with Arson featuring near the top of each district. Other areas highlighted for further progression include youth engagement; reducing arson and antisocial behaviour. Members also expressed great concern regarding attacks on Firefighters.

**RESOLVED – that members note the report**

**160.5 Clerk to Authority's Information Pack**

The Clerk to the Authority informed Members of the information pack which detailed Member attendance at Conferences and their subsequent feedback.

**RESOLVED – that Members note the information pack**

**161 REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

**Treasury Management Strategy 2007/2008**

The Treasurer advised Members on the Treasury Management activity and the overview of the Budget which was approved by the Authority on 9 February 2007. The report details the operational aspects of the Treasury Management function and is based upon my views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Authority's Treasury Advisor. He informed members that the strategy covers the Review of 2006/2007; Treasury Management Activity; Prudential Indicators, including Treasury limits in force which will limit the Treasury risk and activities of the Authority; Prospects for Interest Rates; Borrowing Strategy and Investment Strategy.

**161. Treasury Management Strategy 2007/2008**

The Treasurer reported that in accordance with this strategy a proactive approach has been taken to managing the Authority's debt. £2,620,300 of Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) loans with an average interest rate of 4.99% have been repaid and this has generated a discount of £17,600. A £2,000,000 LOBO has been obtained at a rate of 3.95% with a fixed period of 3 years with annual calls every 3 years. Those actions have reduced the average rate for Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) to a favourable 4.05% compared with the national average of 6.21%. The average rate for all external borrowing is 3.99% compared to the previous level of 4.67% resulting in the next 3 years annual saving of £20,800. The Treasurer also informed Members that they should be aware that there is a risk that the LOBO could be recalled after the three years, if there is a significant rise in interest rates. If this occurred, borrowing would need to be replaced either from new borrowings or reducing investments. Based on his view of interest rates it is very unlikely that the LOBO will be recalled.

The Treasurer informed Members that the Authority needs to approve a number of Prudential Indicators for the next three years to comply with the relevant Statutory Code of Practice. These indicators were set by the Authority on 9<sup>h</sup> February, 2007, as part of the overall 2007/2008 Budget Strategy and Authority Tax level. He reported that the detailed Prudential Indicators are included at Appendix A and the key indicators are summarised within paragraph 5 of the report. The Authorised Limit is set on a rolling basis to finance the underlying capital financing requirement for the next three years and to provide sufficient headroom to manage day to day cashflows. The Strategy also detailed the prospect for Interest Rates and the Borrowing and Investment Strategy.

**RESOLVED – that Members approve the Borrowing and Investment strategies outlined within the report.**

**162. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Members are requested to pass 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 defined in paragraphs 1 and 3a of Schedule 12A to the Act namely information regarding an individual; and information furnished to the Authority by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public”.**

**163. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – that Members approve the confidential minutes of proceedings of the Cleveland Fire Authority on 26 January 2007 and 16 March 2007**

**164. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED – that Members approve the confidential minutes of the Executive committee 23 March 2007.**

**165. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER  
REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING – 26 JANUARY 2007  
RMB Confidential Reports for Information**

**RESOLVED – that Members note the confidential minutes and reports**

**166. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed Members that the Vice Chair Councillor John Jones would not be standing for re-election this year and that this would be his last Cleveland Fire Authority. The Chairman gave her personal thanks and informed Councillor Jones that his presence, wisdom and sense of humour would be greatly missed by Members and Officers and on behalf of the Authority made a presentation to Councillor Jones and wished him a happy healthy retirement. The Chairman also informed Members that Councillor Ray Waller was also not standing for re-election and wished to place on record the Authority's thanks for his outstanding service and commitment and as the first Cleveland Fire Authority Chairman and one of the longest standing members of the Authority he would be greatly missed.

**COUNCILLOR MRS BRENDA FORSTER JP  
CHAIRMAN**