



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 29 JANUARY 2010

PRESENT:	CHAIRMAN: Councillor Porley – Middlesbrough Council
	HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL: Councillors Brash, Flintoff, Lilley
	MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL:- Councillors Brunton, Clark, Rogers, Thompson
	REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:- Councillors Abbott, Briggs, Cooney, Dunning, Forster, Ovens
	STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:- Councillors Beall, O'Donnell, Patterson, Salt, Stoker, Woodhead
	PROPER OFFICERS:- Legal Adviser, Assistant Chief Financial Officer
	FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS:- Chief Fire Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Planning and Democratic Services
	AUDIT COMMISSION: Ms Philippa Corner – Assessment Lead
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:	Councillor Payne (Hartlepool Borough Council) Councillor Cherrett (Stockton on Tees Borough Council)

125. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST

It was noted that no declarations of interest were submitted to the meeting.

126. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Meeting held on the 27 November 2009 be confirmed.

127. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

Councillor Beall sought clarification as to whether the 4.9% mentioned in Minute no 119.1 of the Policy Committee Minutes on 8 January 2010 represented an increase on the amount of Council Tax now paid or a freeze. The Assistant Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the 4.9% is an increase on what is currently paid. He added that the CFA will give full consideration to the Policy Committee's recommendation at its next meeting on 5 February 2010.

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Policy Committee held on 8 January 2010 and Tender Committees held on 26 November 2009 and 8 January 2010 be confirmed.

128. TO RECEIVE COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIRMAN

No correspondence received

129. REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMISSION

129.1 Organisational Assessment

Comprehensive Area Assessment Lead, Ms Philippa Corner, formally presented the results of the Organisational Assessment which concluded that Cleveland Fire Authority is performing well and has a clearly stated vision. The Organisational Assessment recognised that 'Cleveland is becoming a safer place as a result of the Authority's work' and that the Brigade had exceeded their targets in major fires, arson and false alarms. Ms Corner commented that some initiatives are 'work in progress' and the Authority need to focus on monitoring their effectiveness and evaluating the services that are provided.

Councillor Briggs informed Members that the Audit & Governance Committee had extended an open invitation to Mr Gavin Barker of the Audit Commission to attend their meeting.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that it was a pleasing report particularly as the Authority was judged as performing well in a difficult climate. He stated that Cleveland Fire Brigade has been very active in improving community safety and the quality of people's lives within tight financial constraints.

Councillor Brash queried why the issue of alcohol, which was red flagged in Hartlepool Borough Councils CAA, was not given a higher profile in the report as the Organisational Assessment links into the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). Ms Corner explained that the report identified initiatives that had been evidenced and confirmed that the Audit Commission is well aware of the contribution that alcohol makes to fire deaths. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Brigade are also aware of the increasing amount of fire deaths that are related to alcohol and drug use and as well as having an Advocate in place dedicated to these issues, the Brigade is heavily engaged in Partnership working in this regard.

Councillor Ovens highlighted the benefits of sharing data with Partners where possible and Ms Corner stated that collecting data once and using numerous times is acceptable as long as the information is evaluated.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

130. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

130.1 Performance Management Policy

The Chief Fire Officer asked Members to consider the Policy Committee's recommendation to approve the Performance Management Policy, which sets out the Authority's guiding principles for performance management. The Policy is built upon the principles of ensuring the Authority is outcome focussed and that it impact assesses its work on a regular basis. Councillor O'Donnell, in her role as Member Champion for Improvement and Value for Money, stated that she fully supported and endorsed the Policy.

RESOLVED – that the Performance Management Policy be approved.

130.2 Partnership Policy

The Chief Fire Officer asked Members to consider the Policy Committee's recommendation to approve the Partnership Policy, which sets out the Authority's guiding principles for working in partnership with other Public, Private and Voluntary agencies who have a shared ambition to help the Authority deliver better outcomes for local communities.

Councillor Beall commended the Brigade on its positive image in the various partnerships as a 'can do' organisation.

RESOLVED - that the Partnership Policy be approved.

130.3 ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014

The Chief Fire Officer asked Members to consider the Policy Committee's recommendation to approve the ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014, which will further enhance ICT governance arrangements by ensuring that there is focus not only on the provision of technology but on delivering resilient, secure information to staff and people in our communities, whilst significantly contributing to process improvement and consequently of value for money for the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer highlighted the need for information sharing with Partners.

Councillor Brash supported the need for information sharing to ensure that those hardest to reach are assisted by the most appropriate authority.

RESOLVED – that the Policy Committee's recommendation to approve the ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014 be ratified.

130.4 Corporate Risk Register 2010

The Chief Fire Officer asked Members to consider the Authority's Corporate Risk Register 2010, which has been reviewed by the Brigade's Strategic Management Team; this involved a strategic environmental analysis to identify any new or emerging risks.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Corporate Risk Register 2010 is submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis for monitoring purposes, and that any matters of a significant nature will be reported back to the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Cleveland Fire Authority's Corporate Risk Register 2010 be approved.**
- (ii) that Members noted that the Corporate Risk Register 2010 would be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis for monitoring purposes, and that any matters of a significant nature will be reported back to the Fire Authority.**

130.5 Chief Fire Officer Information Pack

- 130.5.1 Fire and Rescue Service Circulars
- 130.5.2 National Joint Circulars
- 130.5.3 NE Regional Management Board Meeting – 15 December 2009
- 130.5.4 Efficiency Savings
- 130.5.5 Appointment of External Auditor
- 130.5.6 Equality & Diversity Awards
- 130.5.7 Director of Fire and Resilience

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

131 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEGAL ADVISER

131.1 Business Report – CFA Appointments 2009/10

The Legal Adviser advised Members that following a report to the Cleveland Fire Authority meeting on 27 November 2009 no nominations had been received to fill the vacancies created by the resignation of Councillor Fitzpatrick (East Cleveland Independent Party). Nominations were again sought as to the vacant positions on the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Appeals Committee. Members discussed the vacancies and agreed that as no nominations had been received, the positions should remain vacant until the Annual General Meeting on 4 June 2010.

RESOLVED – that the vacant positions on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Appeals Committee remain vacant until Cleveland Fire Authority's Annual Meeting on 4 June 2010.

132. VERBAL BRIEFING ON THE NE FIRE CONTROL COMPANY BOARD

Councillor Forster provided Members with a verbal briefing on the North East Fire Control Company Board. She explained that the development of a policy for Annual Leave for RCC staff had been progressed along with a draft policy and procedure for dealing with Capability and that these proposals would now be subject to formal consultation with representative bodies.

Councillor Forster confirmed that in January the North East RMB had provided a written submission to the CLG select committee enquiry regarding the FireControl project highlighting the regions commitment and providing constructive.

Councillor Forster confirmed that the second staff focus group took place on 13 January with further meetings scheduled over the coming months. Councillor Forster also explained that staff training needs to take place soon, otherwise it will not be completed in time and the North East FireControl Centre will not be allowed to participate in the first tranche.

Councillor Forster commented that the visit to Tyne & Wear FRS to see the shared New Dimension equipment had been delayed due to the weather conditions.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

133. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

133.1 Information Pack

- 133.1.1 Performance Report 2009/2010
- 133.1.2 2nd Quarter (April-Sept) National Indicator Fire Related Target report 2009/2010
- 133.1.3 Progress Against Revenue & Capital Budgets 2009/2010
- 133.1.4 Treasury Management Update 2009/2010
- 133.1.5 Audit Commission Work Programme & Scales of Fees 2010/11

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

134. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

134.1 Information Pack - Flooding and Water Rescue

Councillor Cooney informed Members of their recent visit to Tees Barrage where a the Brigades new boat 'Wrighty' was launched.

Councillor Thompson highlighted the significant local flooding which had taken place in East Middlesbrough area and asked if the Brigade had an input on flooding arrangements at a local level. The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that the Fire Authority has no statutory duty to respond to flooding incidents or water rescue, however the public do expect the Fire and Rescue Service to deliver these services. The Chief Fire Office explained that 4 Brigades, including Cleveland, had submitted a bid to RIEP for additional funding to increase the provision of equipment.

Councillor Thompson stated that he appreciated the point regarding statutory provision, and the local community did appreciate the Fire Brigade taking an interest in projects within the community.

Councillor Rogers commented that funding may be available for work completed in connection with flooding and advised the Chief Fire Officer of a contact in Middlesbrough Council who may be able to assist further. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this will be followed up.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

135. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) (VARIATION ORDER) 2006

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 the paragraphs below of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006".

Minute No – 136 paragraphs 1 and 3

Minute No - 137 paragraph 1

Paragraph 1– namely information relating to any individual

Paragraph 3 – namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

136. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the Confidential Minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority meeting held on 27 November 2009 be confirmed.**
- (ii) that the CFA decision to rebuild Skelton Fire Station on the existing site be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

137. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Tender Committees on 26 November 2009 and 8 January 2010 be confirmed.

**COUNCILLOR PETER PORLEY
CHAIRMAN**