



**FIRE AUTHORITY**

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# CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

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## MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2010

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- PRESENT:**
- CHAIR:-**  
Councillor O'Donnell – Stockton on Tees Borough Council
- HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**  
Councillors Atkinson, Flintoff, Payne
- MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL:-**  
Councillors Brunton, Clark, Morby, Rogers, Thompson
- REDCAR AND CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**  
Councillors Cooney, Dunning, Forster, Ovens
- STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**  
Councillors Kirton, Lewis, Salt, Stoker, Woodhead
- AUTHORISED OFFICERS:-**  
Legal Adviser/Monitoring Officer, Treasurer, Chief Fire Officer,  
Director of Corporate Services
- FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS:-**  
Head of Corporate Support
- AUDIT COMMISSION:-**  
Gavin Barker – Senior Audit Manager  
Diane Harold – Audit Manager
- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors Abbott, Briggs (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)  
Councillor Akers-Belcher (Hartlepool Borough Council)  
Councillor Porley (Middlesbrough Council)
- 62. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST**  
It was noted that no declarations of interest were submitted to the meeting.
- 63. MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Annual Meeting held on 30 July 2010 be confirmed.**
- 64. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**  
**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 3 September 2010 and the Tender Committee held on 5 August 2010 be confirmed.**
- 65. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**
- 65.1 Organisational Performance 2009/10 - Presentation**  
The Director of Corporate Services, following a recommendation from the members of Audit & Governance Committee, presented highlights from the Annual Performance 2009/10 report which included information on Risk, Finance, Performance and Audit. She explained that the report provides a tool for strategic planning and decision making and supports one of the eight priorities, '*being high performing and delivering value for money services*'.

## 65.1 Organisational Performance 2009/10 continued

The Director of Corporate Services reported that there had been improvement in 6 of the 8 priority headlines on previous year's figures and highlighted the following areas of outstanding improvement or performance:

- Reduction in primary fires of 13% in 2009/10 compared to the previous year which provided the second highest % reduction in our family group. Cleveland Fire Brigade had the highest percentage reduction nationally (69%), from 3,587 in 2001/02 to 1,117 in 2008/09.
- 17% Reduction in Deliberate Primary Fires from 2008/09 to 2009/10 which had surpassed the PSA target to achieve a 10% reduction by 2010 from a 2000/01 baseline.
- Successful results for; Accidental Dwelling Fires, Primary and Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries, False Alarm Malicious Calls, Road Traffic Collisions Attended, Road Traffic Collisions, Fatalities and Injuries and Customer Satisfaction.
- Efficiency savings made between 2005/06 and 2008/09 amounted to £5.298m which placed the Brigade in second position nationally and the highest performing Combined Fire Authority.

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the Brigade had a zero tolerance to primary fire fatalities and were over target as a result of 5 fatalities in 2009/10. She informed Members that this area was a key priority for the Strategic Management Team.

Councillor Dunning commented regarding the Stonewall Assessment highlighting that although our points had increased, our ranking had dropped.

Councillor Thompson raised the issue of Equality & Diversity and our performance in attracting ethnic minority groups to the workforce and commented that the percentage of population should be taken into consideration. He also praised the work of the Brigade with regard to fire prevention and specifically the installation of smoke alarms.

Councillor Rogers queried the rise of non fire-fighting staff by 75% since 2000/01. The Director of Corporate Services explained corporate staff are now carrying out some front line work as this provides better value for money.

Members congratulated the Director of Corporate Services on an excellent report and found the individual districts Performance Highlights Sheets especially useful which would enable them to be circulated to ward members. Members also agreed that there was no longer a requirement for an Annual Report to be produced

### **RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the report be noted.**
- (ii) that the performance results be noted**
- (iii) that there was no longer a requirement for an Annual Report.**

## 65.2 Redeployment Policy

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that this Policy had been presented to the Executive Committee on 3 September 2010 who following some additions had recommended its approval.

Councillor Kirton referred to 2.2 of the report and sought clarification that this policy would be appropriately resourced. The Chief Fire Officer explained if posts were not available for redeployment then it would be necessary to move to redundancy situation either voluntary or compulsory.

**RESOLVED – that the Redeployment Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report, as recommended by the Executive Committee on 3 September 2010, be approved.**

## 65.3 Redundancy Policy

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that this Policy had been presented to the Executive Committee on 3 September 2010 who had recommended its approval.

**RESOLVED – that the Redundancy Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report, as recommended by the Executive Committee on 3 September 2010, be approved.**

## 65.4 Regional Control Centre Update

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on recent developments within the FiReControl project and also highlighted the business continuity work undertaken by the Brigade to prevent a disruption to control room services as a result of a further delay or failure of the National project. The Chief Fire Officer explained that due to changes to the project at a national level, CLG have confirmed that no fire and rescue service will go-live before July 2011. He also stated that a number of key questions remain outstanding including the ability of the 'final' system to mobilise officers, retained staff and the status of mobile data terminals.

Due to these risks, it has not been possible to enter into meaningful dialogue with CLG and therefore no go-live date for the first wave currently exists. Without a go-live date, it is not possible to progress plans, including human resource issues. The Chief Fire Officer explained that a real risk is emerging that the Fire and Rescue Service will be asked to accept a system that does not have the full functionality which will then be provided at a later date.

The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the contingency plans in place to extend the present mobilising system life span to mitigate the risk of service disruption as a result of further project delay or even complete project failure. He explained that the Brigade are currently working in partnership with Hull University to develop an interim system solution. The new system (SEED) will not incur any procurement costs however a one off expenditure of £30,000 would be required to train existing control room staff and carry out quality assurance testing. SEED has the potential to provide sustainable annual savings of £33,650.

**65.4 Regional Control Centre Update continued**

Members sought further clarification regarding the current Remsdaq system and if there had been any occasion where they had been unable to mobilise.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) it was noted that as a result to changes to the FiReControl Project, Cleveland Fire Authority do not have a defined date to transfer emergency calls to the Regional Control Centre (RCC) in Durham.
- (ii) that the progress of Business Continuity arrangements to prevent a disruption to our control room services as a result of a further delay or failure of the project be noted.

**65.5 Chief Fire Officers Information Pack**

65.5.1 Fire and Rescue Service Monthly Bulletins

65.5.2 National Joint Circulars

65.5.3 Regional Management Board

65.5.4 FireControl Project

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

**66. JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND LEGAL ADVISER**

**66.1 NE Regional Management Board**

The Chief Fire Officer asked Members to consider the governance options for ongoing collaboration between North East Fire and Rescue Services in light of the Fire Minister's comments regarding Regional Management Boards.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that following discussions in each of the respective Fire Authorities, the Chief Officers of the four constituent authorities of the NE Regional Management Board (RMB) met on Friday 10 September 2010 to consider future governance arrangements for regional collaborations and that these options were set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Members discussed the proposal of establishing a North East Fire Forum and how that may assist in progressing a number of projects which are currently underway as part of the RMB endorsement/approvals mechanism.

The Legal Adviser advised that if all constituent Members decided to dissolve the RMB then it could be dissolved immediately, if however only Cleveland no longer wanted to be part of the RMB, then under the Terms we would need to give 12 months notice. The Treasurer stated that should all constituent Members decide to dissolve the RMB then all assets and liabilities would be distributed on a proportional basis, equivalent to each FRA's contributions which would equate to a 25% share to each authority

**66.1 NE Regional Management Board continued**

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the governance options for ongoing collaboration between North East Fire and Rescue Services be noted
- (ii) that the Regional Management Board be dissolved in accordance with the dissolution details highlighted in Appendix 1 of the report.
- (iii) that the proposal to establish a North East Fire Forum consisting of the Chair/Portfolio Holder and Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive of each of the four Fire Authorities be approved.
- (iv) that the future governance of ongoing projects, should the Regional Management Board be dissolved, be agreed at the earliest opportunity.

**67. VERBAL BRIEFING ON THE NE FIRE CONTROL COMPANY BOARD**

Councillor Forster provided Members with an update regarding the NE Fire Control Company Limited.

**RESOLVED: that the briefing be noted.**

**68. REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

**68.1 Final 2009/2010 Statement of Accounts and Audit Commission Annual Governance Report**

The Treasurer sought Members consideration regarding the approval of the Statement of Accounts, now the Audit had been completed and the necessary adjustments made.

Mr Gavin Barker of the Audit Commission presented the results of audit work completed for 2009/10. He asked that Members considered the key issues within his letter before he completes the audit. He confirmed that subject to satisfactory clearance of outstanding matters, he planned to issue an audit report including an unqualified opinion on the financial statements

Mr Barker explained that with regard to Value for Money, he intended to issue an unqualified conclusion stating that the Authority had adequate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. He detailed a number of strengths and areas for further challenge and uncertainty which were highlighted in the report.

Mr Barker concluded that he was satisfied that, in all significant respects, that Cleveland Fire Authority had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2010. Councillor Forster asked for assurance that correct procedures were in place regarding the Pension Scheme. Mr Barker confirmed that arrangements were in accordance with requirements.

**68.1 Final 2009/2010 Statement of Accounts and Audit Commission Annual Governance Report continued**

The Treasurer confirmed that the Audit Commission have completed the Audit of the 2009/2010 Statement of Accounts and that the Statement of Accounts has been amended to reflect a number of issues. These amendments have not changed the General Fund balance for the year, or the balances held by the Fire Authority.

The Treasurer highlighted the Treasury Management Development training which had been arranged for the Audit and Governance Committee Members on 8 October 2010 and offered a general invitation to all Members.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the report be noted.
- (ii) that any actions recommended by the Audit Commission in the Annual Governance Report be implemented.
- (iii) That the Final 2009/2010 Statement of Accounts, incorporating changes agreed with the Auditor be approved.

**69. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

**69.1 Information Pack**

- 69.1.1 Organisational Performance Report 2010/11 – (April – June)
- 69.1.2 Progress Against Revenue and Capital Budget 2010/11
- 69.1.3 Annual Efficiency Statement, Backward Look 2009/10; Forward Look 2010/11

**RESOLVED: that the report be noted.**

**70. REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**70.1 Information Pack**

- 70.1.1 Forward Work Programme 2010/11
- 70.1.2 Method for Assessing Risk Analysis

**RESOLVED: that the report be noted.**

**71. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**71.1** The Chair referred to the Corporate Manslaughter Training which had been arranged at the request of Members and urged Members to revisit their diaries to see if they would be available to attend on 22 October 2010. Councillor Payne suggested that statutory training for Authority Members may need to be considered in the future.

**71.2** The Director of Corporate Services advised Members that the decision has been taken, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, that the Annual Community Awards Celebration would be deferred this year due to the current economic climate. Awards would still be made and these will be presented informally by the Chief Fire Officer and Chair. The Vice Chair commented that it was still important to recognise those who had been nominated and suggested that letters be sent to each nominee.

**71. ANY OTHER BUSINESS continued**

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that Members revisit attendance of the Corporate Manslaughter Training to take place on 22 October 2010.
- (ii) that electronic invitations are forwarded to those Members who utilise an electronic diary system.
- (iii) that the decision to defer the Community Awards Celebration be noted.

**72. 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 Nos 73 & 74 – paragraph 3 – namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Minute No 75.1 – paragraph 4 – namely information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

**73. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Annual Meeting held on 30 July 2010 be confirmed.**

**74. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of the Tender Committee meeting held on 5 August 2010 be confirmed.**

**75. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**75.1 Service Transformation**

The Chief Fire Officer appraised Members on the progress of the Authority's Transformation Programme.

**COUNCILLOR JEAN O'DONNELL  
CHAIR**