



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING FRIDAY, 17 JULY 2009

PRESENT

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Cooney – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL: -

Councillor Beall

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL:-

Councillor Fitzpatrick

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Councillors Brunton, Clark

FIRE BRIGADE OFFICERS: -

Director of Corporate Services, Director of Community Protection,
Director of Technical Services, Head of Planning & Democratic Services,

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor G Dunning – Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

Councillor J Cherrett – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

OS1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Director of Corporate Services sought nominations for the position of Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year. Councillor Norah Cooney was subsequently proposed and seconded whereupon nominations were closed.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Norah Cooney be appointed as Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

Councillor Cooney in the Chair.

OS2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chairman sought nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year. Councillor Jan Brunton was subsequently proposed and seconded whereupon nominations were closed.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Jan Brunton be appointed as Vice Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

OS3 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST

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

OS4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 17 APRIL 2009

Councillor Clark commented that the annual cost to the Brigade of deliberate fires at £24m was quite astronomical. The Director of Community Protection advised that Cleveland were the worst Fire Authority for deliberate fires, however due to some of the recent initiatives, these figures are the lowest we have presented.

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Meeting held on 17 April 2009 be confirmed.

OS5 REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

OS5.1 Presentation on Remit and Forward Work Programme

The Director of Corporate Services gave a presentation which included the purpose of the scrutiny function, the role and responsibilities of Members in the scrutiny process, and potential scrutiny areas for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme 2009/2010.

Members were appraised of the Brigades scrutiny process. Councillors Clark and Brunton asked for background information on the number of approved and implemented recommendations and how recommendations were monitored and actioned. Co-responder and de-staffing an engine were given as examples and the Director of Corporate Services informed Members that recommendations were taken forward by Officers and included in the Corporate Improvement Plan and monitored by the Monitoring Officer for the Plan. Councillor Brunton suggested the Overview and Scrutiny process should be reviewed which could prove to be a learning curve for all involved.

A lengthy discussion took place vis-à-vis the Forward Work Programme. Firefighter safety had been a huge issue the previous year when a number of Firefighters had been injured, and Members had requested that a watching brief be kept on this issue and brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis. Asset management was also a key issue. The Director of Corporate Services advised that the decision on PFI funding would be known by March 2010, and should the Authority be unsuccessful in their bid, decisions would need to be made on the way forward to address this matter. Flooding including water rescue and response was also another priority issue. Due to the further delay on the Regional Control Centre it was agreed that the review of the Control Room at Brigade Headquarters be included within the programme.

After further discussion Members agreed that a Forward Work Programme for the next six months be drawn up to include:

- Firefighter Safety
- Flooding
- Review of the Control Room, Brigade Headquarters

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) **that a Forward Work Programme for the first six months of the period 2009/2010 be agreed to include Firefighter safety, Flooding, and a review of the Control Room at Brigade Headquarters.**
- (ii) **that a review of the Overview and Scrutiny process be undertaken after the above stated six month period**

OS5.2 Fire Brigade Control – Review of Risk Assessments

Councillor Fitzpatrick referred to the statement made by the Fire Minister on the 15 July 2009 advising of a further delay to the Regional FireControl project to May 2011 and queried the impact of this delay on the current control room and service continuity. He suggested that this issue was one for urgent scrutiny. Members requested a further risk assessment be undertaken in view of this announcement and the outcomes of that risk assessment to be brought back to a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Beall suggested this agenda item and associated report be deferred.

RECOMMENDED – that the report be deferred and a further risk assessment undertaken.

OS5.3 Reducing Road Traffic Collisions

The Director of Community Protection reported that this is a strategic priority for the Brigade who have now rescued more people from road traffic collisions than from fires. In its vision for 2014 the Fire Brigade is committed to help protect all members of its communities with specific emphasis on children and young people and others from vulnerable groups. The 'Learn and Live' presentation has therefore been rolled out to young people across the Cleveland area to get this message across. He advised that work undertaken by the Brigade had contributed to improvements in road safety, and the number of fatalities in the age group had dropped from 10 to 4 during the period 2004/2008. Councillor Brunton queried how and what the breakdown was for the "cost of a life" which was detailed as (£1.64m), The Director of Community Protection stated this figure was taken from the Economic Cost of Fire in 2004.

Councillor Beall referred to the Officer Tracker Group committee of which he was a member, and wondered if this was something the Brigade could be involved in. The Director of Community Protection advised that as a result of a fatal fire in Stockton in 2005 arrangements were put in place whereby specifically safety related matters would be shared with Station Managers and this Tracker Group and he would check that these arrangements were still in place.

Councillor Fitzpatrick asked if the 'Learn and Live' presentation was shown in public houses and community groups and especially to young women as he felt this would have a beneficial influence on young men and their actions.

The Director of Community Protection confirmed that there was a rolling programme in educational establishments which was undertaken under the context of road safety week. Councillor Brunton queried if there were any areas Members needed to look into and the Director of Community Protection advised

that this was a multi-agency success driven by the Fire Service with commitments from Police, Ambulance Trusts and Local Authorities. The biggest need was to ensure this capacity was developed and it was important that the success is evaluated and Members would be informed of any arising issues.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the contents of the report be noted**
- (ii) that Members actively supported Cleveland Fire Brigade's work in reducing Road Traffic collisions in the process of commissioning services aligned to Local Area Agreements**

**COUNCILLOR N COONEY
CHAIR**