



CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF POLICY COMMITTEE FRIDAY, 8 JANUARY 2010

- PRESENT:** **CHAIRMAN**
Councillor Porley – Middlesbrough Council
- STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL:-**
Councillors O'Donnell, Woodhead
- REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**
Councillors Forster, Ovens
- BRIGADE OFFICERS:-**
Director of Community Protection, Head of Planning & Democratic Services
- PROPER OFFICERS:-**
Legal Adviser, Treasurer
- APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor Payne – Hartlepool Borough Council
 Councillor Patterson – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

116. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST

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

117. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2009

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Policy Meeting held on 13 November 2009 be confirmed.

118. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

118.1 Performance Management Policy

Members considered the Performance Management Policy and agreed to recommend its approval to the Fire Authority on 29 January 2010.

A Strategy will be developed by the Director of Corporate Services and presented at a future meeting for Members' information.

RECOMMENDED: that approval of the Performance Management Policy be forwarded to the Fire Authority on 29 January 2010.

118.2 Partnership Policy

Members considered the Partnership Policy and discussed the importance of strong partnership arrangements which they agreed are playing an increasingly important role within the Authority's service delivery. Councillor Ovens commented that strong Partnerships with the Local Authorities are very important.

118.2 Partnership Policy (continued)

Members agreed to recommend the approval of the Partnership Policy to the Fire Authority on 29 January 2010. The Partnership Policy will be delivered through Partnership Strategy which is currently being reviewed by the Director of Business Development and will be brought back to a future Fire Authority Meeting for information.

RECOMMENDED: that approval of the Partnership Policy be forwarded to the Fire Authority on 29 January 2010.

118.3 People Strategy 2009-2014

Members considered the People Strategy for the Brigade for the next 5 years. Members noted that the People Strategy is an 'umbrella' strategy that introduces a number of others strategies i.e.:

- Workforce Development
- Leadership Development
- Equality and Diversity
- Organisational Development
- Health and Wellbeing
- Employee Relations

Councillor Forster highlighted the need to ensure that the Strategy can be easily read by all and suggested that in future an alternative colour be used for the heading on pages.

Councillor Forster supported the use of PRIDE to highlight the Brigade's values and in delivering the Authority's risk.

RECOMMENDED: that the People Strategy that underpins the Authority's priority of 'Employer of Choice' within the Strategic Plan be noted.

118.4 Equality and Diversity Strategy 2009-2013

Members considered the Equality and Diversity Strategy and noted that the Policy underpins the Authority's priority of 'Diversity' within the Strategic Plan.

Councillor Forster, as Member Champion for Diversity, praised the Strategy and commented that the Brigade is not simply paying 'lip service' to Equality and Diversity, but is putting the Strategy into practice and staff have confidence in it.

RECOMMENDED: that the Equality and Diversity Strategy that underpins the Authority's priority of 'Diversity' within the Strategic Plan be noted.

118.5 ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014

Members considered the ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014. Members noted the contents and discussed the Environmental Impact Assessment. Councillor Forster, as Member Champion for Neighbourhoods, asked if staff were encouraged to turn off their PCs when leaving the office rather than leaving them on standby.

118.5 ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014 (cont)

The Director of Community Protection explained that a Sustainability in the Workplace e-learning programme had been circulated to staff outlining the small changes which when added together provide a massive impact. Councillor Forster encouraged all Members to complete the e-learning programme.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that approval for the ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014 be recommended to the Fire Authority on 29 January 2010**
- (ii) that the contents of the ICT Policy and Strategy 2009-2014 be noted**
- (iii) that Members of the Fire Authority complete the Sustainability in the Workforce e-learning programme**

118.6 Deliberate Fire Strategy 2009-2014

Members considered the Deliberate Fire Strategy 2009-2014 and noted the service objectives, outlined at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authority's Strategic Plan 2009-2014.

Councillor Forster asked if meetings were held with Clerk of Courts with regard to robust sentences for offenders. The Director of Community Protection explained that as a result of contact made on the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the attacks in Stockton on Firefighters, links have been forged with the Crown Prosecution Service in order to discuss fire related issues.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the contents of the Deliberate Fire Strategy 2009-2014 be noted**
- (ii) that the service objectives, as set out at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014 be noted**

118.7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction Strategy 2009-2014

Members considered the Road Traffic Collision Reduction Strategy 2009-2014 and the priority areas identified to reduce the number of people killed and seriously insured as a result of road traffic collisions.

Councillor Forster asked if the Brigade was able to follow the lead of the American Fire Departments by attending RTCs with a paramedic on board. The Director of Community Protection explained that with regard to amalgamating fire and ambulance response, there were constraints by Government Departments. Councillor Forster confirmed that she has raised this nationally to highlight the issue.

118.7 Road Traffic Collision Reduction Strategy 2009-2014 (continued)

Members noted the service objectives, outlined at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the contents of the Road Traffic Collision Reduction Strategy 2009-2014 be noted**
- (ii) that the service objectives, as set out at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014 be noted**

118.8 Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2009-2014

Members considered the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2009-2014 and the priority areas to reduce adverse impact of health inequalities.

Councillor Ovens commented that she believed the Partnerships were working well in this area and that she has received literature from Partners outlining the Brigade's measures in this area.

Councillor Forster stated that the Brigade are doing a fantastic job in this regard but that the government need to be reminded that these initiatives cost money. She also enquired if victims of domestic violence would be able to go to the Redcar new build when it was completed. The Director of Community Protection explained that lifestyle programmes are being developed to assist victims of domestic violence to raise confidence levels.

Councillor Ovens commented that alcohol has a big effect on accidental fires. The Director of Community Protection agreed and explained that a programme is being developed to target binge drinking and substance abuse.

Members noted the service objectives, outlined at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the contents of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2009-2014 be noted**
- (ii) that the service objectives, as set out at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014 be noted**

118.9 Children and Young Persons Strategy 2009-2014

Members considered the Children and Young Persons Strategy 2009-2014 and the priority areas identified to support young people to make positive contributions to their communities and to enjoy fulfilling and health lifestyles.

Members noted the service objectives, outlined at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the contents of the Children and Young Persons Strategy 2009-2014 be noted**
- (ii) that the service objectives, as set out at 4.3 of the report, aimed at achieving the strategic objectives identified in the Authorities Strategic Plan 2009-2014**

118.10 Cleveland Fire Authority Corporate Risk Register 2010

Members considered the Corporate Risk Register 2010. The Corporate Risk Register 2010 contains new/amended risks identified following a review of the Register by the Strategic Management Team. The Corporate Risk Register will be monitored through the risk management arrangements. Specifically this will involve submitting it to the Audit and Governance Committee who will then report to the Authority on any matter of a significant nature.

Councillor Forster queried the level of risk allocated to Environmental risk which was identified as 'medium'. The Director of Community Protection explained that the level of risk refers to the Brigade's ability to overcome issues and not the impact of climate change itself.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that Cleveland Fire Authority's Corporate Risk Register 2010 be noted.**
- (ii) that approval of Cleveland Fire Authority's Corporate Risk Register 2010 be forwarded to the Fire Authority on 29 January 2010.**
- (iii) that Members note that the Corporate Risk Register 2010 is submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis for monitoring purposes, and that the Committee report to the Fire Authority on any matters of a significant nature**

119. REPORT OF THE TREASURER**119.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009/2010 to 2013/2014 and 2010/2011 Council Tax Level**

The Treasurer provided Members with a review of the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and indicative Council Tax for 2010/2011, highlighting the current national financial position.

119.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009/2010 to 2013/2014 and 2010/2011 Council Tax Level (cont)

The Treasurer asked Members to consider the Council Tax increase for 2010/2011, along with the following factors:

- the longer term stability and sustainability of the Authority's Council Tax income, which needs to reflect the Government's commitment to maintain to 2010/11 grant allocations;
- the Government's statement of Council Tax capping and
- the impact of increases on Council Tax payers

The Treasurer explained that on the basis of the above factors, Members needed to review the previous planning assumption of annual Council Tax increases of 4.9% for the period 2010/2011 to 2013/2014. It was suggested that for 2010/2011 the increase be reduced to 4.4% and for 2011/2012 to 2013/2014 to 3%. The Treasurer explained that although an increase of 4.4% should not be capped, this cannot be guaranteed.

Councillor Ovens stated that she thought that Council Tax Payers would welcome 4.4%, although she believed that in future, income from Local Authority Partners could 'dry up'.

Councillor Forster commented that we need to stand up against further reductions in funding, as we cannot take many more cuts. Councillor Forster proposed that the increase of 4.9% should be maintained.

Following detailed discussions Members agreed that an increase of 4.9% on Council Tax for 2010/2011 be recommended to the Fire Authority on 5 February 2010. Members also suggested that the Council Tax information leaflet explain what we do in more detail and what the public are getting for their money.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the report be noted**
- (ii) that an increase of 4.9% on Council Tax for 2010/2011 be recommended to the Fire Authority on 5 February 2010.**
- (iii) that improvements be made to the Council Tax information leaflets**

**COUNCILLOR PETER PORLEY
CHAIRMAN**