

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING

11 DECEMBER 2020



PRESENT:

CHAIR

Cllr Paul Kirton – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Tim Fleming, Marjorie James, Stephen Thomas

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Teresa Higgins, Naweed Hussain, Jon Rathmell

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Billy Ayre, Adam Brook, Cliff Foggo, Mary Ovens

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Luke Frost, Lynn Hall, William Woodhead MBE

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, ACFO – Strategy, Policy & Resources, ACFO – Community Protection, Treasurer, Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Ashley Waters - Middlesbrough Council

Cllr Jean O'Donnell – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

149. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

The Chair welcomed new Member Councillor Cliff Foggo from Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council to the Authority.

150. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted no Declarations of Interests were submitted to the meeting.

151. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on 16 October 2020 be confirmed.

152. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 20 November 2020 and Audit & Governance Committee on 27 November 2020 be confirmed.

Councillor Lynn Hall suggested that the Executive Committee Minutes could contain more detail and highlighted the lack of Conservative representation on the committee. The Legal Advisor and Monitoring Officer (LAMO) reported that the minutes were a synopsis of the meeting and are published on the website along with all associated non-confidential papers for both Executive and Audit & Governance Committees. Referring to representation on committees he confirmed that this would be decided post-election at the Annual Meeting in June 2021.

153. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR

<u>NJC</u>	Covid-19 Support Agreement – additional activities Brigade Managers Pay Award 2020 Vaccination
<u>FBU</u>	Toxic Fire Effluents

RESOLVED – that the communications be noted.

154. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

154.1 COVID-19 Briefing – Presentation

The CFO provided Members with a detailed presentation on the latest position of the Covid-19 pandemic which covered:-

- Situational Awareness
 - Why Tier 3 Restrictions?
 - Infection Rate / Trend
 - Symptomatic Testing Rate
- Key Emerging Issues
- CFA strategic objectives/intentions
- Operational response
- Broader support
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The CFO outlined a seven day analysis of the figures for the Tees Valley which covered the rate per 100,000 population for Hartlepool (218), Stockton (155), Redcar & Cleveland (136) and Middlesbrough (179). He reported that the rate across the North East had decreased after lockdown but was already starting to climb again.

The CFO provided a summary of staff sickness at currently out of 549 staff, 24 are off with sickness, 2 with Covid, 1 with suspected Covid and 6 self-isolating which was testimony to the approach the Brigade had taken to protect the workforce and extra measures put in place to achieve a Covid-secure workplace.

Councillor James noted that some organisations had issues with absenteeism from staff having multiple bouts of self-isolation which did not require a doctor's note. The CFO confirmed he was aware of a number of cases where this has occurred and gave assurances that a robust system was in place to manage this.

Councillor Hall thanked the CFO for the presentation and ask that it be circulated to Members for reference. She also highlighted the need to support staff self-isolating. The CFO noted that where possible non-operational staff turned to agile working throughout the pandemic which allowed those self-isolating to work from home.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be noted and circulated to Members for reference.

154.2 Annual Statement of Assurance 2019/20

The CFO informed Members that the Annual Statement of Assurance 2019/20 was a statutory requirement produced in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012. He referred Members to Appendix 1 which outlined:

- Operational Assurance
- Financial Assurance
- Corporate Governance
- Performance

The CFO reported that the Audit & Governance Committee had scrutinised this report at its meeting on 27 November 2020 and it would be published on the Brigade website. He highlighted the positive comments of HMI Phil Gormley (page 3) and external auditors Mazars (pages 14 – 15) which supported the Brigade's position as one of the top performing fire and rescue services in England.

Councillor James queried the terminology on the Assurance Summary at page 24 and suggested an alternative term to 'Teesside' be adopted to describe the four local authority areas covered by the Brigade as a collective. The CFO agreed to update this to ensure it is clear and transparent.

RESOLVED - That the Annual Statement of Assurance 2019/20 be approved, subject to updated terminology on the Assurance Summary at page 24 of the document.

154.3 Information Pack

- 154.3.1 National Joint Circulars
- 154.3.2 Campaigns

Councillor Hall commended the Brigade's response to safety initiatives and queried how audiences had been reached throughout the pandemic. The CFO confirmed that this had been achieved through the use of digital technology and social media and agreed to provide members with further details.

Councillor Ovens noted the valuable work of the home safety visits and asked how many had been conducted. The CFO confirmed that over 6,000 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) had been carried out over the past six months and 1,100 Safe and Well Visits which were able to capture and refer on any safeguarding issues. In addition there were online tools and virtual HFSVs and the intention is to increase face-to-face visits in a covid-secure manner.

Councillor Ovens queried whether prevention work was continuing with schools. The CFO reported that these were triaged and continued subject to agreement with the school to ensure that teachers, children and Brigade staff were not put at risk.

RESOLVED – That the information pack be noted.

- 155. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (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 paragraphs 1 and 3 below of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006”, namely information relating to an individual and information relating to any financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) holding that information.”
- 156. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**
RESOLVED – that the confidential minutes of the Ordinary Meeting on 16 October 2020 be confirmed.
- 157. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**
RESOLVED – that the confidential minutes Executive Committee on 25 October 2020 be confirmed.
- 158. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**
158.1 HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Service COVID-19 Inspection 2020 – Draft Summary of Findings
Members received details of the draft summary of findings following the HMICFRS Covid-19 inspection.

**COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR**