
CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING

30 JULY 2021



PRESENT:

CHAIR

Cllr Paul Kirton – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Ben Clayton, Tim Fleming

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Teresa Higgins, Jon Rathmell

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Billy Ayre, Cliff Foggo, Mary Ovens

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Luke Frost, Lynn Hall, Steve Matthews, Jean O'Donnell,

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Strategic Planning & Resources, Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer, Treasurer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Tom Cassidy - Hartlepool Borough Council

Councillor Naweed Hussain, Ashley Waters - Middlesbrough Council

29. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST

Councillors Hall and Matthews declared Personal Non-Pecuniary Non-Prejudicial Interests. Min. No. 35.2 refers.

30. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual meeting of 4 June 2021 be confirmed.

31. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee on 25 June 2021, Executive Committee on 9 July 2021 and Executive (Appeals) Committee on 9 July 2021 be confirmed.

32. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR

LGA - NJC / EMP Circulars

Lord Greenhalgh - Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan consultation

RESOLVED – that the communications be noted.

33. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

33.1 COVID 19 Briefing – Presentation

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) provided Members with a detailed presentation on the latest position of the Covid-19 pandemic as of 27 July which covered: -

- National Summary - infection / deaths / hospital admission rate
- North East Authorities – infection rate over last 7 days
- National Local Authorities – infection rate
- Tees Valley Authorities – infection rate
- North East - vaccination rates 18+
- COVID-19 Staff Wellbeing
- CFB Approach to Lifting Restrictions
- Broader Role

The CFO informed Members that despite infection rates reducing by 50% from the previous week the North East was still twice the national average. He reported that staff absences the previous week, due to the 'pingdemic', had been double the current rate which had directly impacted the availability of crews to staff appliances and at its worst left the Brigade 30% below its operational capabilities.

The CFO reported that the government has since brought in guidance on isolation exemptions for critical workers who have been 'pinged' which involves the Brigade reinstating its lateral flow testing (LFT) station to give staff the choice of taking a LFT at work for seven continuous days or isolating at home for 10 days.

Councillor Ovens expressed thanks to staff for assisting with the vaccine roll out in the Redcar area and in particular the mobile service.

Members highlighted that only 53% of Brigade staff have been double vaccinated and asked if more could be done to encourage them. The CFO confirmed there was a lot of emphasis on Health & Wellbeing within the workplace and staff would be actively encouraged to have the vaccine. He hoped that this low figure was due to misreporting and confirmed that the Brigade's position was reflected nationally in other fire and rescue services.

The Chair asked for confirmation of the number of volunteers supporting the vaccine programme. The CFO confirmed that there were circa 51 vaccinators and over 100 other volunteers helping with marshalling and registration. Members placed on record thanks to all volunteers for using their free time to support the programme which highlights the fantastic work of the Brigade.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be noted.

33.2 Cleveland Fire Authority's Draft Vision 2030

The CFO presented Members with the Authority's Draft Vision 2030 which will replace the current vision contained within the Community Integrated Risk Management Plan (CIRMP) 2018-2022 and captures the aspirations and long-term destination of the Brigade.

33.2 Cleveland Fire Authority's Draft Vision 2030 cont.

The presentation covered how the Brigade aspires to continue being a leading fire and rescue service which:

- makes Teesside safer and stronger by saving lives, changing lives and protecting businesses
- has a professional, proud and passionate workforce with innovative and resilient leaders
- is a welcoming, trusted and respected organisation
- builds on learning and innovative digital approaches
- develops climate change plans to build a greener future

The CFO reported that staff and the community had been consulted on their expectations and opinions in relation to the draft vision and the results of this were summarised at Appendix 2 and 3.

RESOLVED - that the Draft Vision 2030 (Appendix 1) be approved, as recommended by the Executive Committee on 9 July 2021.

33.3 Draft Corporate Plan 2022-26

Members considered the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-26 which sets out the Authority's strategic direction for the next four years and vision to 2030. It outlines the community profile; horizon scanning; headline performance 2020/21; HMICFRS Inspection; finances; corporate goals 2026; and delivering the plan.

The CFO referred Members to the following key insight sources which will shape the underpinning Community Risk Management, People and Resource Plans that will guide the work of the Brigade from 1 April 2022:

- HMICFRS Inspection
- Internal Audit and Evaluation
- Community/staff feedback
- Community Risk Profile (Appendix 1)
- Changing Landscape document (Appendix 2)
- Performance Report 2020/21 (Appendix 3)

RESOLVED -

- (i) That the strategic planning activities and sources of insight associated with the development of the Draft Corporate Plan 2022-26, detailed at Section 4 of the report, be noted.**
- (ii) That, as recommended by the Executive Committee on 9 July 2021, the draft Corporate Plan 2022-26, attached at Appendix 4, be approved.**

33.4 Information Pack

- 33.4.1 National Joint Circulars
- 33.4.2 Employers Circulars
- 33.4.3 Campaigns

33.4 Information Pack cont.

Councillor Ovens referred to the significant number of empty buildings in Redcar & Cleveland and asked what involvement the Brigade had with keeping them safe. The CFO confirmed that there was no remit to inspect vacant properties, but the Brigade kept a register of over 15,000 other premises that would be subject to inspection under its Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) which categorises building from very low to very high risk. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Community Protection (ACFO-CP) confirmed that at present four significant audits were carried out every day and this was increasing due to the recent expansion of Fire Safety team. He added that the RBIP was currently being reviewed to ensure the right premises are targeted and it was the expectation that 2,500 audits per year will be achieved with the team at full capacity.

Councillor Ovens also highlighted the Safe and Warm campaign scheduled for October which she welcomed. The CFO confirmed that the Brigade would once again be here to help local authorities with the issue of fuel poverty by supporting vulnerable members of our communities.

Councillor Hall noted it was National Road Victims Month in August and asked how the Brigade supported this campaign. The CFO acknowledged the rise in road traffic accidents this year following a reduction as a result of lockdown in 2020. He confirmed that the Brigade has a small Road Safety Team which schedules a range of preventative activities throughout the year which produce results. The team will also promote Project E.D.W.A.R.D in September.

RESOLVED – That the information Pack be noted.

34. TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS OF THE TREASURER

34.1 Process for Approving 2020/21 Statement of Accounts

Members received details from the Treasurer on Mazars' timetable for completing the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts and considered the options for approving them.

As previously reported to the Audit & Governance Committee, the Treasurer noted that Mazars faced a number of challenges to delivering the 2020/21 audit and proposed a timetable of late September for the Audit to commence with a view to completing mid-November. The Treasurer sought approval to give the Executive Committee delegated powers to approve the accounts at its meeting on 19 November 2021.

Councillor Foggo noted that this proposed arrangement did not allow for the accounts to be scrutinised by the Audit & Governance Committee. The Treasurer suggested the draft accounts be scrutinised at the 26 August 2021 Audit and Governance meeting where the Auditors would be present to answer any queries.

After much discussion about these contingency arrangements Members agreed to swap the Executive Committee and Audit & Governance Committee dates in November to allow the accounts to be scrutinised by Audit and Governance before being approved by the Executive Committee the following week.

34.1 Process for Approving 2020/21 Statement of Accounts cont.

RESOLVED – that Members approved the following arrangements in order to accommodate Mazars' timetable for completing the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts:

- That the Audit & Governance Committee meeting scheduled for 26 November 2021 be moved to 19 November 2021 to allow this committee to scrutinise the accounts.
- That the Executive Committee scheduled for 19 November 2021 be moved to 26 November 2021 and this committee be delegated authority to approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

34.2 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Consultation: Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23

Councillors Hall and Matthews declared a Personal Non-pecuniary Non-Prejudicial Declarations of Interests as detailed at Min. No. 29.

The Treasurer provided Members with details of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) consultation on Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23 designed to increase support to the most vulnerable residents in the SBC area.

Members discussed the financial impact this would have on the Authority, which was a £48,000 reduction in annual council tax income from SBC, and the likelihood that the other three constituent councils would take similar action and potentially leave the Authority with a £192,000 recurring council tax income deficit.

Members were asked to consider the following three options:

- 1) Note the position and not respond.
- 2) Respond supporting the proposal and request that the Authority's concerns regarding the reduction in recurring Council Tax income received by the Authority be considered by SBC when making their decision.
- 3) Option 3 – respond objecting to the proposal on the grounds it reduces recurring Council Tax

Following a vote: 0 Members voted for Option 1; 3 Members voted for Option 2 and 6 Members for Option 3.

RESOLVED – that the Treasurer to respond to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in connection with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23 consultation objecting to the proposal on the grounds it reduces recurring Council Tax income for the Authority.

35. **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, 2, 4 and 5 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 any individual; information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; 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; and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.”
36. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**
RESOLVED – That the confidential minutes of the proceedings of the Cleveland Fire Authority Annual meeting on 4 June 2021 be confirmed.
37. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETINGS**
RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee on 9 July 2021 and Executive (Appeals) Committee on 9 July 2021 be confirmed.

COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR