

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING

25 MARCH 2022



PRESENT:

CHAIR

Cllr Paul Kirton – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Tom Cassidy, Ben Clayton, Tim Fleming

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Teresa Higgins

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Cliff Foggo, Mary Owens

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, ACFO–Strategic Planning & Finance, ACFO–Community Protection, Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer, Deputy Treasurer

APOLOGIES:

Treasurer

Cllrs Billy Ayre, Adam Brook - Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Cllrs Naweed Hussain, Tom Mawston - Middlesbrough Council

Cllr Steve Matthews - Stockton on Tees Borough Council

121. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST

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

122. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of 11 February 2022 be confirmed.

123. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee on 25 February 2022 and Executive Committee on 4 March 2022 be confirmed.

124. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR

The following communication were received:

- Fire & Rescue Services Association – Fire Service Reform
- Gill Gittins – Green Book Negotiations
- Fire Brigades Union Head Office – Service Duty Systems, Working hours

RESOLVED – that the communications be noted.

125. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

125.1 Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented the outcomes from the consultation exercise on the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26, as detailed in the feedback report at Appendix 2.

The CFO reported that the CRMP sets out the Authority's risk management proposals for the next four years which will direct work activities and resources. These are summarised below:

- enhancements to our risk identification and assessment arrangements
- helping people stay safe in their homes
- tackling arson and deliberate fire setting
- delivering efficient, effective and value for money community safety activities
- supporting businesses to keep their buildings safe
- ensuring our fire-fighters can respond quickly to operational incidents including those across the border
- supporting national resilience
- being better prepared to deal with incidents involving buildings where the height can have serious impact on firefighting and evacuation
- efficient deployment of our operational resources
- exploring further collaboration and partnership working

The CFO noted that the Authority had to deliver the CRMP against the approved cost envelope of £30.6m and while this was a four-year plan, current uncertainties from rising inflation and energy costs, pensions issues and national insurance increases may impact budget forecasts in coming years.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) That the details of the consultation exercise in relation to the Authority's draft CRMP proposals 2022-26 as set out in Sections 5 and 6 of this report and in the Consultation Feedback Report at Appendix 2, be noted.**
- (i) That Members noted the updated medium term financial position, the continued uncertainty in future funding and the potential deficits of between £0.551m and £1.467m as detailed in paragraphs 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 of this report and set out in full in the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022.**
- (ii) That in light of the Authority's comprehensive risk assessments, financial position and consultation exercise, Members approved the CRMP 2022-26, attached as Appendix 1, for publication and implementation on 1 April 2022. Strategy 2022/26 that was approved by the Fire Authority on 15 February**

125.2 Resource Plan 2022-26

Members considered the Resource Plan which is aligned to the CRMP 2022-26 and sets out the how the Authority will achieve value for money for the community and maximise organisational performance to ensure efficient, sustainable resources for next four years.

The CFO reported that the plan incorporated the Authority's Efficiency Plan and was a 'living' document that would adapt as progress was made towards delivering against the following themed areas:

125.2 Resource Plan 2022-26 cont.

- Human Resources
- Medium Term Financial Resources
- Assets (estates, fleet and equipment)
- Digital Transformation
- Procurement
- Collaboration & Partnerships
- Climate Change

The Plan has been Equality Impact Assessed with no detrimental impact on any group of staff, including those with one or more protected characteristics.

RESOLVED – that the Resource Plan 2022-26 be approved for implementation with effect of 1 April 2022 and published on the Authority’s website.

125.3 Information Pack

125.3.1 Campaigns

RESOLVED – That the Information Pack be noted.

126. REPORT OF THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

126.1 Cleveland Fire Authority Meetings 2022/23

Members considered the proposed schedule of Cleveland Fire Authority meetings for the municipal year of 2022/23. The Clerk confirmed that the dates were aligned to the Authority’s business planning calendar.

Councillor Hall expressed concern that the Authority did not currently have an Audit & Governance Chair in place and suggested an appointment be made before the Annual Meeting on 17 June 2022. The Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer (LAMO) informed Members that in accordance with the Standing Orders an Audit & Governance Committee Chair would be appointed at the Annual Meeting and the Vice Chair would preside until then.

Councillor Frost asked whether the meeting times could be moved from 2pm to 1pm to avoid rush hour traffic. The LAMO confirmed that as meeting times were part of the Standing Orders this could only be considered at the Annual Meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Cleveland Fire Authority meeting schedule for 2022/23 be approved.

126.2 Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23

Members considered the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 which covered:

- Economic Background and Outlook for Interest Rates
- Interest Rate Forecasts up to March 2025
- Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23
- Borrowing Strategy 2022/23
- Investment Strategy 2022/23
- Minimum Revenue Provision and Interest Costs / Regulatory Information 2022/23
- Borrowing and Prudential Indicators

126.2 Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 cont.

The Deputy Treasurer reported that the Strategy had been scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 February 2022 and no issues had been raised. Councillor Foggo asked how the situation in Ukraine would impact the Authority. The Deputy Treasurer confirmed that any impact from inflationary pressures would be reflected in the Authority's outturn position for the first quarter 2022-23. The financial position would be closely monitored and Members kept informed of any issues.

Councillor Frost noted that the Authority was required to work to a 2% efficiency and productivity target and asked if this was achievable. The CFO confirmed that the National Framework required the Authority to achieve 3% efficiencies from the operational workforce and 2% efficiencies from non-pay budgets and these had been built into the Resource Plan. The Executive Leadership Team was currently developing a contingency plan to meet a deficit of up to £1.4m and the CFO acknowledged this might increase due to the current financial uncertainties.

RESOLVED - That Members noted the report and approved the following detailed recommendations: -

- (i) **That the prudential indicators outline in Appendix B be approved.**
- (ii) **Borrowing Strategy 2022/23**
That Members note that in the event of a change in economic circumstances that the Treasurer may take out additional borrowing in advance of need if this secures the lowest long term interest cost.
- (iii) **Investment Strategy 2022/23**
That the Counterparty limits as set out in paragraph 7 be approved.

127. REPORT OF LEGAL ADVISER AND MONITORING OFFICER

127.1 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

The Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer (LAMO) reported that in line with the provisions set out in the Localism Act 2011, the Authority had a statutory duty to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of its chief officers
- the remuneration of its lowest paid employees
- the relationship between:
 - the remuneration of its chief officers and
 - the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers

The LAMO outlined the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 at Appendix 1, which had been recommended by the Executive Committee on 4 March 2022, and highlighted the remuneration of the lowest paid employees which was:

- Firefighter (Development) - £25,702
- Non-operational employees Grade B (Development) - £18,562 (£18,887 subject to confirmation of April 2021 payment).

He reported that the Government's National Living Wage sets a minimum wage for all workers aged 25 years and over which equates to £18,325.50, which was lower than the Authority's lowest paid employees Grade B (Development) which was £18,562 (£18,887 subject to confirmation of April 2021 payment).

RESOLVED - That Cleveland Fire Authority's Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 be approved and published.

- 128. 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 3 & 4 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) holding that information.”
- 129. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETINGS**
RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee on 4 March 2022 be confirmed.
- 130. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**
- 130.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade’s HMICFRS Inspection 2022**
The CFO provided Members with the outcomes of the ‘This is Us’ self-assessment and outlined the preparation activities for the inspection scheduled for May 2022.
- 130.2 Ukraine Crisis Update**
Members received details of the local, regional and national Fire and Rescue Service activities to support the people Ukraine.

COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR