

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

22 SEPTEMBER 2023



PRESENT

CHAIR

Councillor David Coupe – Middlesbrough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Ben Clayton

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Peter Chaney

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Sufi Mubeen

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, Legal Adviser, Treasurer

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Strategic Planning & Resources

APOLOGIES

Councillor Tom Cassidy – Hartlepool Borough Council

Councillor Mick Stoker – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Councillor Mary Ovens – Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

27. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Special Executive Committee on 31 September 2023 be confirmed.

29. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

29.1 Safety Issues Regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

The CFO provided an update on the emerging safety issues surrounding the use of RAAC concrete in public buildings from both a building and community safety perspective.

He reported that in response to the associated risks from RAAC, the Brigade has instigated a plan of action which includes: collating a risk register of known premises to inform operational response plans; carrying out effective familiarisation visits to understand the specific locations of affected areas; completion of up-to-date site specific information capturing insight from familiarisation visits; robust pre-planning including establishing an informed pre-determined attendance.

29.1 Safety Issues Regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete cont.

The CFO added that from a Building Safety perspective, Responsible Persons will need to review the fire risk assessment to ensure a satisfactory level of fire safety is maintained. Similarly, schools taking on extra pupils from other schools identified as having RAAC, will also need to review their fire safety measures to ensure they remain suitable, with fire drills undertaken at the earliest opportunity to highlight any issues from increased occupancy. From a Community Safety perspective, the CFO confirmed that the Brigade will provide prevention advice to those in affected buildings or who have moved to new premises.

The CFO reported that 10 out of the Brigade's 16 primary properties were constructed between 1952 - 1991 which aligns with the period of RAAC use and are currently undergoing a two-stage survey, the outcomes of which will be reported at a future meeting.

Councillor Clayton asked whether the use of RAAC had been limited to public buildings. The CFO confirmed that it was likely to have been used more widespread but the current Government advice was only relating to this category of building.

Councillor Chaney asked if there was a final date for Risk Assessment Registers to be completed. The CFO viewed this as a dynamic process where councils will keep a live register of the buildings. He added that from the Brigade's perspective they would need to be aware of any potential for structural failure before deploying any resource into that building.

Members agreed to feedback the urgent nature of completing the risk registers to their constituent councils.

RESOLVED: –

- (i) That Members noted the current position and action taken regarding the potential for RAAC in the wider community and the Fire Authority's estate.**
- (ii) That further updated be received regarding RAAC status in the wider community and in respect of the Authority's primary estate once survey results are received.**

29.2 Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 – Progress Report

The CFO outlined the progress on the implementation of the CRMP 2022-26 relating to the actions contained within the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Service Plans.

He noted that there were two outstanding actions for 2022/23 relating to achieving an unqualified opinion on the 2021/22 financial statements and an unqualified value for money opinion from the Authority's external auditors Mazars. Mazars reported to the Audit & Governance Committee on 30 June 2023 that this was due to outstanding pension fund auditor assurance and confirmed that no significant weaknesses had been identified in the draft value for money opinion.

29.2 Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 – Progress Report cont.

The CFO referred to the Internal Operating Plan 2023/24 at Appendix 2 which outlined the progress of the actions aligned with the delivery of the Service Plan 2023/24. He reported that all actions were either complete or in progress and Mazars had again indicated that delays were expected with reporting the outcomes of the audit of the 2022/23 Financial Statements, which would not commence until January 2024.

RESOLVED – That the progress on the corporate priorities set out in the Authority’s CIRMP 2022-26 Service Plan 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and Service Plan 2023/24 (Appendix 2), be noted.

29.3 Public Sector Equality Duty Report

The CFO outlined the Public Sector Equality Duty Report which was based on the Brigade’s data collected for the period April 2022 – March 2023. The report covered:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy • Highlights of our Work 2022/23 • Gender Pay Gap Reporting • Diversifying the Workforce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Profile • What Does our Data Tell Us? • Creating an Inclusive Culture • Our Staff Networks • Activities Throughout the Year |
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Members applauded the fantastic work that had been undertaken throughout the year and passed on thanks to all teams involved.

Councillor Mubeen referred to the low percentage of ethnic staff within the Brigade and offered to provide a direct link to mosques across Teesside to support positive action work. The ACFO-CP confirmed that the Brigade had developed an extensive Community Engagement Champions Network and a personal invite from the mosques would be welcome to support this work.

RESOLVED – that the publication of the Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2022 be noted.

- 30. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION ORDER) 2006** “That Under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 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 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) holding that information and namely 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.”

31. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Confidential Minutes of the Special Executive Committee on 31 August 2023 be confirmed.

32. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

32.1 Procurement Update Report

Members received details relating to contract letting procedures, exemptions to contract procedure rule and future procurement plans.

32.2 Minimum Service Level Consultation: Draft Statutory Code of Practice

Members considered the Department of Business and Trade's consultation on the draft Statutory Code of Practice.

33. CONFIDENTIAL JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & TREASURER

33.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 – 2026/27

The CFO and Treasurer provided an update on the Authority's MTFS and a proposed timetable for setting the 2024/25 budget.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID COUPE
CHAIR**