

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING



8 OCTOBER 2021

PRESENT

CHAIR

Councillor Paul Kirton – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Tim Fleming

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Teresa Higgins – Middlesbrough Borough Council

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillors Lynn Hall, Jean O'Donnell

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Mary Ovens

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

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

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Luke Frost – Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Treasurer

53. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

54. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

54.1 Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) provided Members with a detailed presentation on the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26, as required by the Home Office Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England, May 2018.

He reported that the draft CRMP (Appendix A), the Corporate Plan and the Vision bring together the strategic planning work that has been undertaken by the Brigade. This includes the following insight work approved by the Authority in July 2021:

- Community Risk Profile
- 'Changing Landscapes'- environmental scanning exercise
- Performance Report 2020/21
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-24

In addition, the HMICFRS inspection report; internal audit and evaluation reports; and community and staff feedback also contribute to providing valuable insight to ensure any evidence-based medium to long term future challenges are mitigated and opportunities are grasped.

54.1 Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 cont.

The CFO reported that the Plan aims to achieve the Authority's corporate objective 'to minimise fire and rescue related risks in the community' and takes account of the Authority's difficult and uncertain financial situation, as detailed within section 5 of the report.

Members considered the 9 risk management proposals up to 2026 in detail which were:-

- 1) To develop our approach to risk management to reflect good practice and improve the safety, health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of our communities
- 2) To build on our successful approach to helping people stay safe in their homes
- 3) To tackle arson and deliberate fires
- 4) To ensure our prevention activities remain efficient, effective and deliver value for money
- 5) To enhance our risk-based approach to support businesses to keep their buildings safe in line with the Fire Safety Order 2005
- 6) To be better prepared to deal with incidents involving buildings where the height can have serious impact on firefighting and evacuation
- 7) To ensure that our firefighters plan and prepare to respond effectively to operational incidents including those across our borders.
- 8) To develop options for improving the efficient deployment of our emergency response resources to flexibly meet current and future risks and demands
- 9) To be 'Better Together – Working in Partnership'

Councillor Kirton supported the focus on risk-based inspection detailed in proposal 5. The CFO confirmed that the Building Safety Bill and the Grenfell inquiry had driven a focus on this area and the Brigade had received funding to enhance its own fire safety department to deliver a new risk-based inspection programme.

Councillor Ovens asked how the Teesside Freeport would impact the risk for the area. The CFO confirmed that this was unknown at present and would be considered under the Brigade's annual risk review.

Councillor Ovens queried the Brigade's resource base and asked whether it was near the operational limit. The CFO reported that ORH had been commissioned to look at the minimum staffing levels required for each station and the final report was currently being analysed. He added that any changes to operational staffing in the future would need to consider the impact on prevention and protection activities.

Councillor Higgins raised concern about the number of student flats being built in the Middlesbrough area and whether appropriate safety considerations are being made at the planning stage. The CFO confirmed that Teesside University accommodation was fully sprinklered and that the age of a building is a causal factor. He added Cleveland had 27 high rise residential buildings above 18m and significantly more over 11m.

Councillor Higgins referred to the rise in attacks on firefighters carrying out their duties and asked if the Brigade had the support of the police in pursuing prosecutions.

54.1 Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26 cont.

The CFO confirmed that police and ambulance staff were also being targeted and legislation was being strengthened to address this. Nationally, work was underway with the National Fire Chiefs Council and Association of Ambulance Chief Executives to look for a collective solution which he believed would involve greater engagement with communities and high-profile prosecutions.

Councillor Hall noted the safeguarding referrals that were being picked up from Safer Homes Visits. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer-Community Protection confirmed that hub prevention teams made a significant number of high-risk referrals to partners on the back of safer home visits and often the extent of vulnerability is not known until they access the property. He added that local teams were engaging with estate agents and landlords to offer Safer Home Visits and free smoke alarms to enhance the safety for tenants in rented properties.

The Chair reported that 13 Group had pledged to house five Afghan families in 'family-appropriate' accommodation in the Stockton area. The CFO asked Members to ensure their districts were aware of the work protection teams were doing to keep residents safe in rented accommodation. Councillor Hall praised this service offered by the Brigade.

Members thanked officers for the detailed report and excellent documents and asked that consideration be given to how this information is shared with the public.

The CFO reported that the draft Plan would be considered by the Authority on 15 October and a period of consultation would commence from 29 October 2021 – 21 January 2022, as detailed at Appendix B. Stakeholder feedback would be presented to the Authority in March 2022 for final approval.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) That the strategic planning activities and sources of insight associated with the development of the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-26, as set out in Section 4 of the report, be noted.**
- (ii) That the medium term financial position, as set out in paragraphs 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 of the report, be noted.**
- (iii) That Members noted the draft CRMP 2022-26 Consultation Plan at Appendix B to run from 29 October 2021 to 21 January 2022.**
- (iv) That Members recommended the approval of the draft CRMP 2022-26 to the Fire Authority on 15 October 2021, for consultation.**

COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR