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# CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

## MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

17 SEPTEMBER 2021

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### PRESENT

#### CHAIR

Councillor Paul Kirton – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

#### HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Tim Fleming

#### 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, Treasurer, Legal Adviser & Monitoring Officer

### APOLOGIES:

Councillor Teresa Higgins – Middlesbrough Borough Council

Councillor Luke Frost – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

### 47. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

### 48. MINUTES

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 9 July 2021 and Executive (Appeals) Committees on 9 July 2021 and 30 July 2021 be confirmed.**

### 49. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

#### 49.1 COVID-19 Update

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

- National Infection / Hospital Admissions / Death rate over last 7 days
- Tees Valley Authorities infection rate for last 7 days
- North East – Vaccination Rates 18+
- CFB approach to reoccupying workplaces
- Staff wellbeing / sickness absence rates

The CFO reported that the Brigade would continue to support the regional vaccination programme for as long as it was financially viable to do so and he was currently pursuing avenues of funding from the NHS to achieve this. Members praised the continued efforts of volunteers from the Brigade to deliver the programme and supported the CFOs efforts to secure further funding.

#### **49.1 COVID-19 Update cont.**

Members queried whether cases of post-vaccination sickness and long covid was having an impact on the Brigade. The CFO confirmed that the Brigade's main sickness was not covid-related but was related to musco-skeletal for operational staff and stress for support staff which was addressed via the in-house occupational health provision. He added that he was the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) lead on health and wellbeing and had issued a guidance note on long covid.

**RESOLVED – that the presentation be noted.**

#### **49.2 Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2020/21**

Members considered this annual report which highlights the Authority's work, and reinforces its commitment towards, complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This included:

- Gender Pay Gap Reporting
- Workforce Profile
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Staff Networks
- Activities

Councillor Hall commended the Brigade's recent 'Being Inclusive: Being Healthy' Conference for staff at the Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough which covered the issues of neurodiversity, transgender, race, sexuality and healthy eating and complimented the work covered in this report. The Chair passed on thanks on behalf of the Executive Committee to the organisers.

Councillor Ovens asked for details of the profile of the trainee firefighter programme. The CFO confirmed that from the thousands of applications the 18 recruited were all white males. He confirmed that this process was constantly being reviewed to establish why it does not bring about representation of our communities. Similarly, the on-call recruitment process, based on the national model, was under review to examine why nationally it was failing to attract new recruits. Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Community Protection (ACFO – CP) was leading this work to examine the key themes of recruitment, availability and commitment.

**RESOLVED – that the Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2020/21 be noted.**

#### **49.3 Fire Control Collaboration Update**

The CFO provided Members with details of the current Fire Control arrangements for Cleveland and outlined three potential collaboration opportunities which have been identified by the North East Regional Strategic Board based on geographical boundaries. These were:

- Strategic Alignment (new system and shared staffing remotely)
- Strategic Alignment (new system and shared staffing on-site)
- Strategic Partnering (joint provision of Fire Control on one site)

**49.3 Fire Control Collaboration Update cont.**

He reported that an independent consultant would be engaged to progress this work and develop an outline business case for each option in accordance with the specification of requirements document (Appendix 1). This work is expected to commence Autumn 2021 in line with the Brigade's procurement arrangements and Members would receive further details as the project develops.

Members questioned the timeframe and skillset required for the consultancy work. The ACFO-CP confirmed that there were a number of companies with experience of this type of collaboration work and the timeframe would be dependent on how successful the tendering exercise was.

Members asked if other authorities had taken this collaborative route. The CFO confirmed that Cleveland's situation of having its own fire control was not typical and most had already opted for a collaborative approach.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

**50. 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 items of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 & 3 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 an individual; and information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual; and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information."

**51. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED - that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee on 9 July 2021 and Executive (Appeals) Committees on 9 July 2021 and 30 July 2021 be confirmed.**

**52. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**52.1 Procurement Update Report**

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

**52.2 Provision of Fire Safety Qualifications – Tender Acceptance**

Members considered the results of the Brigade analysis of the tenders received for the Provision of Fire Safety Qualifications.

**COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON  
CHAIR**