

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

21 JANUARY 2022



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 Council

Councillor Luke Frost – Stockton Borough Council

91. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

92. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 26 November 2021 be confirmed.

93. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

93.1 Draft People Plan 2022-26

Members considered the draft People Plan 2022-26 which is aligned to the timeline and requirements of the CRMP 2022-26 and based on the new Integrated Talent Management Framework which covers the following four themes:

- Talent Management
- Health & Safety
- Health and Wellbeing
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) reported that the Plan had been shaped through insight from a number of sources, including the Brigade's Health & Wellbeing Board, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board and the Health & Safety Committee and their associated committees and networks. The Plan has been Equality Impact Assessed and considered to have no detrimental effect on any group of staff. In addition it has been subject to extensive consultation with all staff and representative bodies and no issues have been reported.

93.1 Draft People Plan 2022-26 cont.

Councillor Hall ask for clarification on how current the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data was and whether the 2011 Census Data was used. The CFO confirmed that the Brigade updated its Community Risk Profile annually using a range of sources and acknowledged that the Census Data collected for 2021 was not yet available.

Councillor Ovens asked what plans were in place to recruit new firefighters. The CFO confirmed that as the Brigade had an ageing operational workforce with an average age of 45, he envisaged annual operational recruitment would be required to maintain the numbers to deliver the service.

Councillor Ovens asked what mental health support was available for retired firefighters. The CFO confirmed that the Brigade was responsible for the transition of firefighters into retirement and ensured that any specific mental health support received from the Brigade's occupational health service is transferred to the NHS teams on retirement.

RECOMMENDED – that the draft People Plan 2022-26 be approved by Cleveland Fire Authority at its meeting on 11 February 2022.

93.2 Dignity at Work Policy

This policy was presented to Members following review in line with the Authority's Policy Framework arrangements. It was previously known as the Anti-Bullying at Work Policy and the new title reflects the Brigade's focus on maintaining a positive workplace culture free from bullying, harassment and victimisation.

The policy has been Equality Impact Assessed and deemed to have no detrimental effect to any particular group. Conversely, it is considered to provide additional benefits to staff in protecting them against unacceptable behaviour. No issues were highlighted from consultation with Representative Bodies.

RESOLVED – that Members approved the Authority's Dignity at Work Policy at Appendix 1.

The Chair agreed to consider the remainder of the Chief Fire Officer's reports in the following order:

93.3 Unwanted Fire Signals/Risk Based Inspection Policy & Strategy

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Community Protection (ACFO-CP) provided Members with an update on the progress with the Unwanted Fire Signals Strategy (UwFSS) and associated changes to the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP).

He reported that the Brigade's current UwFSS was approved by the Authority for implementation in October 2017 with an additional cost recovery element implemented on 1 April 2021. To date no charges have been made and fire engineering staff continue to work closely with organisations on the threshold of being charged to reduce the likelihood of further UwFSSs.

93.3 Unwanted Fire Signals/Risk Based Inspection Policy & Strategy

The ACFO-CP noted that the Authority was also required to have a RBIP for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005 in premises to which it applies. The RBIP categorises these premises according to their risk from Very High to Very Low and informs the Brigade's mobilising procedures to UwFS, as detailed at paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The ACFO-CP informed Members that the Executive Leadership Team had approved changes to the RBIP Policy on 22 December 2021 in relation to the stratification of risk for premises which fall under the RBIP. This resulted in a slight increase to the number of premises that the Brigade will respond to on receipt of an automated fire alarm (AFA) comprising of an additional 109 hotels.

He added that while this may create a slightly increase in attendances to AFAs, the revised RBIP will ensure that protection activities are targeted at buildings most at risk and dedicated staff will continue to work with appropriate responsible persons to mitigate the increased workload.

Members welcomed the addition of hotels to the list of properties crews will respond to on receipt of an AFA.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

93.4 HMICFRS: Annual Assessment of Fire And Rescue Services in England 2021

The CFO provided Members with an overview of the key findings of the HMICFRS State of Fire and Rescue Services in England Report 2021, attached at Appendix 1. The report is produced by Sir Thomas Winsor HM Chief Inspector of FRS and provides a three-part assessment on: findings of the Tranche 1 inspections of 13 services between February – August 2021; overview of gradings from the 13 inspections; full list of fire and rescue reports in the period covered by this report.

The CFO referred Members to Section 4 of the report capturing the key headlines which details that while progress has been made in some areas more change is urgently required.

Sir Thomas reiterated the six recommendations for national reform of the fire service, which he said remains necessary and needs to be brought in faster. These are:

- the Home Office should precisely determine the role of fire and rescue services, to remove any ambiguity; **(not yet implemented)**
- the sector should remove unjustifiable variation, including in how they define risk; **(not yet implemented)**
- the sector should review and reform how effectively pay and conditions are determined; **(not yet implemented)**
- the Home Office should invest chief fire officers with operational independence, whether through primary legislation or in some other manner; **(not yet implemented)**
- there should be a code of ethics; and
- the Home Office should ensure that the sector has sufficient capacity and capability to bring about change.

93.4 HMICFRS: Annual Assessment of Fire And Rescue Services in England 2021 cont.

In his final statement, Sir Thomas Winsor concluded that: *“The fire and rescue services continue to be an enormous asset to our communities. In many respects, the sector’s response to the pandemic has been exemplary ... but the sector faces significant obstacles that are hampering its progress. These include: rigid national terms and conditions that stop services from fully exploiting their resources to meet local needs; out-of-date working practices; a lack of diversity; and, in some respects, weaknesses in leadership development ... policy-makers and legislators need to raise the priority of fire reform considerably. The service, its staff and the public deserve no less”.*

The CFO informed Members that he would consider the findings of the inspections and ensure they are built into the Brigade’s final preparation work. In addition, any new areas for development would be documented within the Authority’s corporate planning process and prioritised actions captured within the Internal Operating plan for 2022/23 onwards.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted**
- (ii) That Members noted that the CFO will review the Report and ensure any new areas for development are captured within the Authority’s corporate planning processes and documented in the Internal Operating Plan for 2022/23 onwards.**
- (iii) That Members noted that in line with current arrangements the CFO will continue to provide the Executive Committee with update reports in regard to the next round of Inspection**

93.5 HMICFRS Inspection 2021/22: Summary of Findings from Tranche 1

Following the first tranche of the second round of inspections of the Fire and Rescue service, HMICFRS published a summary of their findings, attached at Appendix 1, which reflected the findings of the annual assessment discussed above.

The headlines from the 13 inspections in the first tranche were:

- Services are making good progress on protection
- Services need to do more on prevention
- Inconsistent funding and governance arrangements persist
- Some services do not allocate resources appropriately
- The on-call firefighter model needs more attention to make sure that it works now and in the future
- Good intentions to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion are not always successful

The CFO highlighted the change in methodology for Tranche 1 which involved all interviews being undertaken remotely via teams. Tranche 2 has moved on to a hybrid model and Members discussed the impact from the inspection interviews being held remotely. The CFO confirmed that group interviews and station visits would continue to be carried out face-to-face.

93.5 HMICFRS Inspection 2021/22: Summary of Findings from Tranche 1

The CFO noted that Cleveland will be inspected in the third tranche scheduled to take place in May 2022 and that reports will be brought to the Executive Committee in due course.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

94. 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 & 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 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.”

95. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee on 26 November 2021 be confirmed.

96. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

96.1 Procurement Update Report

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

96.2 Provision of Corporate Insurance - Tender Acceptance

Members considered the results of the Brigade analysis of the tenders received for the Provision of Corporate Insurance.

97. CONFIDENTIAL JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER

97.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23-2025/26

The Treasurer set out the Authority’s Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2022/23-2025/26 which included the proposed Council Tax levels for 2022/23.

**COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR**