
CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

16 MAY 2025



PRESENT:

CHAIR

Councillor David Coupe – Middlesbrough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillors Bob Buchan

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Peter Chaney

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Mick Stoker

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Strategic Planning & Resources (Teams)

Assistant Director of Assets

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Ben Clayton – Hartlepool Borough Council

Councillor Sufi Mubeen – Stockton Borough Council

Councillor Dennis McCabe – Middlesbrough Council

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Community Protection

Legal Adviser & Monitoring Officer

121. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

122. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 7 March 2025 be confirmed.

123. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

123.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade's HMICFRS Inspection 2023-25

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented the HMICFRS Third Round inspection outcome report which assessed the Brigade across 11 areas against five graded judgements ranging from outstanding, good, adequate, requires improvement or inadequate on each area.

The CFO reported that the Brigade scored Good in 4 areas, Adequate in 4 areas and Requires Improvement in 3 areas. No areas were considered Inadequate.

He acknowledged that there had been some negative press interest around claims of bullying and leadership issues and assured Members that these areas would be the focus for 2025/26 with work already underway to make improvements.

123.1 Cleveland Fire Brigade's HMICFRS Inspection 2023-25

He recognised that the Brigade was on a journey of trust with staff to ensure openness and transparency and thanked the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Strategic Planning & Resources (ACFO-SPR) for being instrumental in leading this.

The ACFO-SPR confirmed that they had already had positive feedback from staff and trade unions who recognised the cultural changes underway across the Brigade.

She assured Members that the 16 areas for improvement highlighted in the report had been captured in an action plan and would be brought to the next Executive Committee meeting for Members to monitor the progress. Regular updates would also be made to the HMICFRS Portal which ensures the Brigade is making progress against its recommendations.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) That Members noted the verbal update.**
- (ii) That Members noted that an action plan capturing the 16 areas for improvement highlighted in Cleveland's HMICFRS Inspection Report 2023-25 be brought to the Executive Committee on 4 July 2025.**

123.2 National Interagency Liaison Officer (NILO) Procedure

The CFO informed Members that this procedure had been updated to align with current national standards and to give staff clear guidance on the role of the NILO in both training and incidents.

Previously, NILOs at Cleveland did not have the delegated authority to deliver a response on behalf of the Brigade. This updated procedure now provides them with delegated authority to respond on behalf of the Brigade to incidents where their expertise is required within the first 30 minutes. This includes the following main categories of incident:

- CBRN(E) and conventional terrorism including marauding terrorism
- Major Incidents
- Complex or protracted police-led incidents
- Spontaneous and planned serious public order.

The CFO confirmed that these changes ensure that Cleveland's NILOs have the delegated authority to make risk-critical decisions where appropriate supporting incident commanders with tactical advice and command functions.

RESOLVED - That Members noted the report.

123.3 Gender Pay Gap Report

Members received a report outlining Gender Pay Gap information as at 31 March 2024 which outlined the difference between average earnings of men and women across the organisation, detailed at Appendix 1.

123.3 Gender Pay Gap Report cont.

The ACFO-SPR confirmed a pay gap between male and female employees however provided Members assurance that this was the result of the roles in which men and women undertake across the Brigade, with a predominance of men in operational roles and the salaries they attract. This pay gap was still significantly lower than the national figure.

She informed Members that work underway over 2025/26 to address the gender pay gap included ensuring recruitment, development and promotion processes were free from discriminatory elements and encouraging applications from all parts of the organisation and community by using Positive Action.

Members expressed disappointment about the Brigade's gender pay gap but acknowledged the challenges of making significant impact in such a small organisation with a limited budget.

The ACFO-SPR confirmed her intention to provide Members with a wider report covering disability, ethnicity as well as gender next year to provide a clear overview of the Brigade's pay gap position.

She added that in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Regulations) 2017 the Brigade is required to publish this information on the Governments and its own website.

RESOLVED – That the Gender Pay Gap report be noted.

123.4 Pensions Dashboard Readiness

The CFO provided an update on the Brigade's position on achieving pensions dashboard readiness ahead of the 31 October 2025 connection deadline, and the associated budget requirements.

He referred Members to the Dashboard Connection Readiness Report at Appendix 1 prepared by XPS as the Authority's scheme administrator. This identified that some improvements were required to current data to be ready for connection, which was expected to be at the higher end of the £13.7k - £26k estimate. In addition, there would be ongoing annual administration fees of between £4.4k - £6k.

Members queried why the estimated costs were so varied. The ACFO-SPR confirmed that it was a sliding scale depending on the work that was required and the Authority needed assurance it was on track.

The Treasurer confirmed that the cost could be met from the underspend on the pay offer or interest rates income and gave assurance it would have no impact on the current budget.

The Chair supported the continued use of XPS to undertake the Pension Dashboard work and noted the importance for staff to be able to access the pensions they are entitled to.

123.4 Pensions Dashboard Readiness cont.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the proposal for XPS to undertake the Pension Dashboard work on behalf of the Authority to ensure readiness by the 31 October 2025 deadline be noted.
- (ii) That Members noted the connection costs (estimated between £13.7k - £26k) will need to be managed within the overall 2025/26 budget.
- (iii) That Members noted the ongoing administration costs (estimated between £4.4k - £6k) will be a budget pressure for 2026/27.

123.5 Management Structure

The ACFO-SPR presented Members with an updated Management Structure which provided new roles, titles and pay grades which was more aligned with how other Brigades presented their structures across the service.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the updated Management Structure.

124. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

124.1 Paul McGrath

The Chair paid tribute to Paul McGrath, one of the Authority's Independent Persons, following his sudden death on 26 April. Paul was a valued colleague and integral part of the Authority's independent standards provision since 2019 and will be a great loss. Thoughts and prayers were extended to Paul's family and friends.

124.2 Death of Firefighters in Oxfordshire

The CFO informed Members about an operational incident at Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service the evening before which had resulted in the death of two on-call firefighters and one member of the public.

(12.00pm) The Chair agreed that the meeting be adjourned to allow Members and Officers to join in a two minutes silence at the flag pole to pay their respects.

(12.15pm) Meeting resumed.

125. 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 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 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.”

126. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee on 7 March 2025 be confirmed.

127. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

127.1 Procurement Update Report

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

127.2 Provision of Electricity – Tender Acceptance

The CFO presented the outcomes of the procurement exercise for the provision of electricity for the Brigade's estate.

127.3 Cleveland Fire Brigade Risk Management Services C.I.C

The CFO provided Members with a verbal update on changes associated with the community interest company.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID COUPE
CHAIR**