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# CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

## MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

7 MARCH 2025

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**PRESENT:**

**CHAIR**

Councillor David Coupe – Middlesbrough Council

**HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Councillors Bob Buchan, Ben Clayton

**REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Councillor Peter Chaney

**STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Councillor Mick Stoker

**AUTHORISED OFFICERS**

Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer, Legal Adviser & Monitoring Officer

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Strategic Planning & Resources

Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Community Protection

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor Sufi Mubeen – Stockton Borough Council

Councillor Dennis McCabe – Middlesbrough Council

**100. MEETING OPENED AND ADJOURNED**

The Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer (LAMO) opened the meeting at 12:00pm and with the Committee's agreement adjourned the meeting until 12:30pm to allow for additional Members to arrive to achieve quoracy.

12:30pm – Meeting re-opened with Cllrs Chaney and Clayton present.

**101. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

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

**102. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 24 January 2025 be confirmed.

**103. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**103.1 Service Plan Priorities 2025/26**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer Strategic Planning & Resources (ACFO-SPR) outlined a suite of corporate priorities for inclusion in the Authority's 2025/26 Service Plan. These had been aligned with the corporate goals set out in the Community Risk Management, People and Resource plans covering 2022-26 and emanate from key strategic and financial planning work by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in liaison with staff and Trade Unions.

### **103.1 Service Plan Priorities 2025/26 cont.**

The ACFO-SPR confirmed that the Service Plan 2025/26 will be considered by the Authority on 28 March 2025 and published on the website once approved. Progress will be tracked on the Key Priority Tracker with quarterly updates to this Committee.

**RECOMMENDED – That the corporate priorities and Service Plan 2025/26 be approved by the Authority on 28 March 2025.**

### **103.2 Career Break Policy**

This policy had been reviewed in line with the Brigade's Key Document Framework resulting in minor changes to make the document 'gender neutral' and to ensure that roles reflect the current organisational structure.

The CFO confirmed that the policy had been equality impact assessed in line with the Brigade's procedure with no detrimental impact on any group of staff, including those with one or more protected characteristics.

**RESOLVED – That the Career Break Policy be approved.**

### **103.3. Discipline Policy**

The ACFO-SPR informed Members that this policy had been updated following a review of the roles and responsibilities associated with the introduction of a dedicated Commissioning Manager and Professional Standards functions and to consider the recommendations of the HMICFRS 'Standards of behaviour: The handling of misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services.'

Members considered the tracked changes at Appendix 1 which aimed to improve how allegations of misconduct are handled while allowing the ELT to retain a more strategic overview.

Cllr Chaney questioned why the Investigation Manager currently did not sit in on an appeal and requested this be changed. The ACFO-SPR confirmed that this was to be considered as part of a wider review of the Policy and agreed to include the change with immediate effect.

The CFO confirmed that this Policy has undergone a refreshed equality impact assessment with no change to the original outcome. and trade unions have been consulted with their feedback forming part of the review.

The ACFO-SPR agreed to email Executive Members the final version of the Policy once both UNISON and the Fire Brigades Union sign off.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the Discipline Policy be approved.**
- (ii) that the ACFO Strategic Planning and Resources circulates the final version of the Discipline Policy to Executive Committee Members once signed off by the Trade Unions.**

#### **103.4. Anti Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2025/26**

Members considered the updated Anti-Slavery & Human Trafficking Statement 2025-26 which demonstrates the Authority's ongoing corporate commitment to ensure compliance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In addition, the statement aims to ensure there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in any part of the Authority's business.

The CFO referred Members to the Statement at Appendix 1 which covers three key areas of risk: Supply Chain; Employment/Recruitment; and Training/Community Safety. The Statement covers work already undertaken within each area of work and new objectives to be implemented for 2025/26 which will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

**RESOLVED – that the Anti-Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for 2025/26 be approved.**

#### **103.5 Social Value Report**

The CFO provided Members with an overview of the approach and progress made to capture social value within procurement at Cleveland Fire Brigade. This aligns to the commitment made in the Brigade's 2022-26 Resource Plan and the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.

The CFO referred Members to the table at para 4.5 of the report which ELT had recently approved to be used as guidance to ensure the overall weighting allocated to social value would be proportionate considering the nature, complexity and cost of the contract. ELT had also approved obtaining annual costing for portal access and reporting functionality on the Social Value TOMS platform to ensure consistency and that Social Value is at the forefront of every new procurement project.

The ACFO-SPR congratulated the Procurement Team for the positive work done to demonstrate the vast spectrum of options when considering social value.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted**

### **104. REPORT OF THE LEGAL ADVISER AND MONITORING OFFICER**

#### **104.1 Pay Policy Statement 2025/26**

The Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer (LAMO) Treasurer reported that in line with the provisions set out in the Localism Act 2011, the Authority had a statutory duty to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of its chief officers
- the remuneration of its lowest paid employees
- the relationship between:
  - the remuneration of its chief officers and
  - the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers

The LAMO outlined the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 at Appendix 1 and outlined the key changes as highlighted in yellow which included:

#### **104.1 Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 cont.**

- Firefighter (Development) - £29,442 (pay award pending 1 July 2025).
- Non-operational employees Grade B (Development) - £24,027 (pay award pending 1 April 2025).

He reported that the Government's National Living Wage sets a minimum wage for all workers aged 25 years and over of £12.21 per hour, which equates to an annual salary of £23,556.64 which was lower than the Authority's lowest paid employees Grade B (Development) which is currently £24,027 (pay award pending 1 April 2025).

The LAMO confirmed that updated pay formula for Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts was approved by the Authority on 13 October 2023 and fixed until 31 December 2024. From 1 January 2025 these will increase in-line with the NJC Gold Book increase.

Cllr Chaney noted that the lowest paid employees were not on much less than the minimum wage and asked what roles these were. The ACFO-SPR noted that there were a few B and C grade employees and highlighted that Green Book pay was lower compared to Grey Book Pay.

The Treasurer informed Members that they had kept £1.00 between the Authority's lowest pay grade and the Minimum Wage which mirrored the approach most local authorities.

**RECOMMENDED - That Cleveland Fire Authority's Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 be approved at its meeting on 28 March 2025 and published on the Authority's website.**

#### **105. REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

##### **105.1 Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 and Third Quarter Review 2024/25**

The Treasurer informed Members that this report had been scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee on 21 February 2025 and was recommended for approval by the Authority on 28 March 2025.

He informed the Committee that as he would not be able to attend the meeting on 28 March he wanted to give Executive Members the opportunity to fully consider the report. This covered:

- Economic Background and Outlook for Interest Rates
- Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Review
- Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26
- Borrowing Strategy 2025/26
- Investment Strategy 2025/26
- Minimum Revenue Provision and Interest Costs and Other Regulatory Information 2025/26
- Regulatory Information and Prudential Indicators 2025/26 (Appendix A)

**RESOLVED – That the recommendations approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at section 2 of Appendix 1 be noted.**

- 106. 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.”
- 107. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**  
**RESOLVED** - that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee on 24 January 2025 be confirmed.
- 108. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**  
**108.1 Procurement Update Report**  
Members received details relating to contract letting procedures, exemptions to contract procedure rules and future procurement plans.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID COUPE**  
**CHAIR**