

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING

13 OCTOBER 2023



PRESENT:

CHAIR

Cllr David Coupe – Middlesbrough Council

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Tom Cassidy, Ben Clayton

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs John Kabuye, Dennis McCabe, Naweed Hussain

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Peter Chaney, Steve Kay, Mary Ovens, David Taylor

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllrs Jim Beall, John Gardner, Stefan Houghton, Sufi Mubeen, Mick Stoker

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, Legal Adviser & Monitoring Officer, Treasurer,

Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Strategic Planning & Resources

Area Manager - Senior Head of Operations

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Henry Ashton – Hartlepool Borough Council

34. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed the Area Manager - Senior Head of Operations to the meeting and placed on record thanks on behalf of the Authority to Carl Boasman who had retired following 31 years with the fire and rescue service, the last three of which he served as ACFO – Community Protection with Cleveland Fire Brigade.

35. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST

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

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of proceedings of the Annual Meeting of 9 June 2023 be confirmed with amendments.

37. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Special Executive Committee meetings on 19 June and 31 August 2023, Audit & Governance Committee meetings on 30 June and 25 August 2023 and the Executive Committee meeting on 22 September 2023, be confirmed.

38. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR

Communications were received from:

- Local Government Association - NJC Circulars

39. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

39.1 HMICFRS 2023/25 (Round 3) Update Report

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Strategic Planning & Resources (ACFO-SPR) provided Members with an update on the HMICFRS inspection programme and ongoing work streams which covered:

- Cleveland Fire Brigade's Inspection 2021/22
- HMICFRS Inspection Tranche 3 Fire and Rescue Services 2023/24
- Cleveland Fire Brigade's Inspection 2023/25
- HMICFRS Thematic Inspection on Handling of Misconduct 2023
- Value & Culture in the Fire & Rescue Service: Spotlight Report

She noted that outcomes from the first tranche of Round 3 inspections were graded against eleven assessment questions, as detailed on Table 2 on page 5 of the report and included an additional grading of 'Adequate' alongside Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate which had been used to grade the previous two rounds of inspection. Outcomes for the second tranche of inspections were due out the following week.

The ACFO-SPR reported that Michelle Skeer OBE QPM had been appointed as His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services for the northern region and Spencer Rowland as the Brigade's Service Liaison Lead. The inspection is due to commence 7 October 2024.

Councillor Kaye asked how the philosophy of the inspection regime was nationally and whether it was competitive. The ACFO-SPR confirmed that while Cleveland was very competitive, the ethos was to share good practice and learning between other Brigade's to drive continuous improvement across the service.

Councillor Kabuye asked how the Brigade could achieve 'Outstanding'. The CFO reported that while no FRS had achieved 'Outstanding' across the board, the Brigade was rated 'Good' on the last two inspections, and he would not expect to achieve less than this on the next round.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

39.2 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26 Change Proposals

The CFO presented Members with proposals for the changes to both the Wholetime and Fire Control duty systems following reviews of both systems in line with the Authority's Service Plan 2023/24 improvement actions:

- UOR 4.1 Review Wholetime Duty System
- SSC 38.1 Improve Emergency Response Cover in Fire Control (Fire Control)

He reported that the Wholetime Duty System had been reviewed in 2022/23 with a number of potential improvements identified. This was presented to the FBU as a change proposal (Appendix 1 refers) and the key features included: maintaining the 2-2-4 Duty System incorporating a 08:00hrs -18:00hrs day shift and a 18:00hrs - 0800hrs night shift. Annualised hours and Blue and Grey standby shifts will be removed. This proposal is subject to consultation and engagement with staff and negotiation with the FBU. This is to be piloted for 12 months from 1 January 2024 and if implemented will be overseen by Watch Managers.

39.2 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-26 Change Proposals cont.

The CFO highlighted the benefits of the proposal which included minimising the amount of time appliances are off the run; reducing the cost of additional hours to cover staff shortages; improve firefighter productivity; removing short notice 'grey shifts' from staff.

The CFO referred to the change proposal for Fire Control Shift Duty System, as detailed at Appendix 2, which essentially is to increase the establishment and introduce a self-rostering staffing model following a Configuration Review in response to difficulties maintaining minimum staffing.

Members queried whether the Authority could afford the additional costs associated with introducing the self-rostering duty system in Fire Control. The CFO confirmed that the increase would ensure there was always a good complement of staff on duty and would support the Brigade's resilience moving forward.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) That the change proposals as set out in the proposed duty systems for Wholetime and Fire Control Staff, be noted.**
- (ii) That Members will receive further reports following staff consultations and engagements and negotiations with the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU).**

39.3 Co-responder

Members received details on the proposal to reinstate Co-responding on a voluntary basis across East Cleveland and considered a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between North East Ambulance Service (NEAS), NHS Foundation Trust and Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) formalising this arrangement. The CFO reported that this would initially be for a six-month pilot period and would cover the following emergency scenarios: -

- Cardiac Arrest (over 16 years old only)
- Maintenance of a patient's airway
- Oxygen Therapy including assisted ventilation
- Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Defibrillation using a semi-automatic AED

He added that the MoU covered the arrangements required to carry out the emergency response service including training, equipment, vehicles, finance, governance and indemnity insurance. The implementation of the MoU was subject to consultation and engagement with staff in East Cleveland and discussion with the FBU to reach a formalised agreement.

Members welcomed the return of Co-Responding to East Cleveland and commended those volunteers involved. They also raised concerns about cost recovery and competing priorities with core work. The CFO gave assurances that the £150 per incident payment to the Authority only covered the expense of getting the crew to the casualty and all training and consumables were covered by NEAS. He added that the Brigade had capacity operationally to support NEAS by providing this life saving service.

RESOLVED: -

- (i) That the report be noted.**
- (ii) That Members agreed to support the reinstatement of co-responding in East Cleveland.**
- (iii) That the draft Memorandum of Understanding between North East Ambulance Service, NHS Foundation Trust and Cleveland Fire Brigade be approved.**

39.4 Information Pack

5.4.1 National Joint Circulars

5.4.2 Campaigns

Councillor Beall noted that Stockton would not be holding a firework display this year due to extensive roadworks in town and queried whether this was expected to have an impact on statistics over the Bonfire Period. The CFO stated that the Brigade's stance was for people to attend organised displays where possible and worked with the Borough Councils to ensure any rubbish and fuel sources were removed from the streets. Councillor Kabuye asked how the Brigade targets information. The CFO confirmed this was done by targeting schools and students during freshers' week as well as during Safer Homes Visits. The AM-Senior Ops confirmed that translation services were available.

RESOLVED – that the information pack be noted.

39.5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION ORDER) 2006

RESOLVED - "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 1, 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 any individual; 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."

40. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED – that the Confidential Minutes of the Special Executive Committee meetings on 19 June and 31 August 2023 and the Executive Committee on 22 September 2023 be confirmed.

41. CONFIDENTIAL JOINT REPORT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER

41.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 – 2026/27

The Treasurer outlined the timetable for setting the 2024/25 budget and provided an update on the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

42. CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER

42.1 Member Allowances – Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP)

Members considered the arrangements for appointing an IRP to review the basic and special responsibility allowances.

**COUNCILLOR DAVID COUPE
CHAIR**