

CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

5 MARCH 2021



PRESENT

CHAIR

Councillor Paul Kirton – Stockton on Tees Borough Council

STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillors Luke Frost, Jean O'Donnell, William Woodhead (Sub)

REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Mary Ovens

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Chief Fire Officer, ACFO – Strategic Planning & Resources, ACFO – Community Protection, Treasurer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Tim Fleming - Hartlepool

Councillor Teresa Higgins – Middlesbrough Council

Legal Adviser & Monitoring Officer

In accordance with Standing Order No. 35 Councillor William Woodhead substituted for Councillor Teresa Higgins.

185. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

186. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 22 January 2021 be confirmed.

187. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

187.1 COVID-19 Pandemic Briefing - Presentation

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) provided Members with a detailed update on the COVID-19 pandemic which covered:

Situational Awareness (2 March 2021)

- Middlesbrough - 130/100k population (31.7% reduction from previous 7 days)
- Redcar - 78/100k population (34.4% reduction from previous 7 days)
- Hartlepool – 129/100k population (20.4% reduction from previous 7 days)
- Stockton – 98/100k population (35.3% reduction from previous 7 days)
- Lowest rates since September 2020 – positive trend line across region.

187.1 COVID-19 Pandemic Briefing - Presentation cont.

Vaccination Programme

- 20 million vaccines now administered in UK
- Over 80s – 94-99% received 1st dose
- Over 75s – 98-100% received 1st dose
- Aged 70-74 – 96-99% received 1st dose
- Aged 60+ not yet invited for vaccination
- 30-32% of population have received 1st dose (1-2% received 2nd dose)

Staff Sickness

- 28 members of staff absent (25 operational - 3 corporate)
- 2 operational staff with confirmed Covid
- 0 staff with suspected Covid
- 8 operational and 3 corporate staff self-isolating

Key Emerging Issues

- Lateral Flow Testing centre established at Queens Meadow Complex (QMC) Hartlepool for Brigade staff 3 days per week
- Support with Community Testing and Surge Testing
- Continued support at vaccination centres with over 100 volunteers.
- Memo of Understanding with NHS to start next week
- CFB Roadmap out of Lockdown – will take careful planning

Councillor Frost passed on thanks to staff from residents using the testing sites and vaccination centres.

Councillor Ovens asked whether the Brigade would be replicating the QMC testing site at other fire stations. The CFO confirmed that the QMC site was a pilot which has now been approved by the Director of Public Health (DPH) at Hartlepool to ensure clinical governance. He added that while it was initially the intention to roll this out to whole-time fire stations, work was currently underway with central government and the DPHs to consider the use of home testing. He confirmed that community test centres would remain in place until June 2021 when it is expected home testing will take over.

RESOLVED – that the briefing be noted.

187.2 Community Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020/21 Progress Report

The CFO updated Members on the progress on the implementation of the Community Integrated Risk Management Plan (CIRMP) 2018-22 and specifically the priorities detailed within the Fire Authority's Service Plan 2020/21.

He reported that since March 2020 the Brigade's ELT focus has been on planning, responding, recovery and back to response phases of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the continued safety of Cleveland Fire Brigade's communities and staff. In addition, the Brigade has had to accommodate an unexpected HMICFR Inspection of its Covid arrangements.

187.2 Community Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020/21 Progress Report cont.

The CFO noted that the Brigade had plans in place for 'reasonable worst case scenarios' both in local and multi-agency settings, and had produced and tested its own Business Continuity Plans arrangements to deal with the pandemic.

He reported that the Covid Strategic Intentions became 'the' priority for the Authority for 2020/21 which were to:

- Deliver statutory responsibilities of the Authority
- Support the wider effort
- Look after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff

He noted that due to the hard work and dedication of staff these had all been successfully achieved. In addition, the CFO referred Members to the summary progress report at Appendix 1 which indicated many of the original priorities had also been achieved and where this was not possible had been rescheduled on a risk basis into the 2021/22 Corporate Internal Operating Plans.

The CFO highlighted the following key areas:

Development of Safety Plan – planning is underway and will be in a position at the end of Summer to launch a public consultation subject to Authority's approval.

Climate Change – part of the vision for this Authority and work is progressing.

Business Continuity Plans – these have been tested through the pandemic and are working well.

Policy Review - all policies will be up to date by 31 March 2021.

Collaborations / Partnerships – work to strengthen these governance arrangements is underway.

EDI – Positive Action work has continued ahead of the recruitment campaign planned for July 2021.

The CFO informed Members that the Brigade Woman's Staff Network was hosting a webinar on International Woman's Day on 8 March to celebrate the achievements of female staff and challenge gender inequality. This will be open for Members of the public to join in and aims to myth bust about careers in the Brigade for women.

Councillor Frost asked if the Brigade had undertaken any work on neurodiversity following the webinar at the LGA Fire Conference. The ACFO-SPR confirmed that the Brigade had been working on producing neurodiversity guidance over the past 6 months which will be considered by ELT this month.

RESOLVED – That Members noted:

- (i) the rescheduling of the Service Plan 2020/21 priorities as a result of Covid 19 major event; and
- (ii) the progress on the re-scheduled corporate priorities as set out in its CIRMP 2018-22 and on the Directorate priorities as agreed by the Chief Fire Officer for the progression within its Brigade (Appendix 1).

187.3 Gender Pay Gap Report 2019/20

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Strategic Policy & Resources (ACFO - SPR) reported that in line with new regulations set out under the Equality Act 2010 in April 2017, it is a requirement of all employers of more than 250 employees to calculate and publish information about the gender pay gap in their organisation.

The ACFO-SPR referred Members to the Gender Pay Gap Report at Appendix 1 which included a table of the data used as at the end of March 2020 and the outcomes of the six calculations required which show the difference between the average earnings of men and women.

She reported that the challenge for the organisation is to eliminate any gender pay gap and the results can be used to assess:

- the levels of gender equality in the workplace
- the balance of male and female employees at different levels
- how effectively skills are being maximised and rewarded.

Councillor Frost noted that overall the picture for Cleveland was very good and the Brigade is confident any gender pay gap does not stem from paying men and women differently from doing the same work.

The ACFO-SPR added that the Authority had a duty under the regulations to publish the data on the Brigade website by 31 March 2021.

RESOLVED – that in line with the provisions set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information), Members noted Cleveland Fire Authority's gender pay gap data as detailed at Appendix 1.

187.4 Fire Standards

The CFO provided Members with details of the work of the Fire Standards Board which is striving to create a suite of Fire Standards that are easily understandable and clear, consistent in structure and are based on defining what 'good' looks like at an organisational level.

The Board was established in 2019 and is made up of representatives from the National Fire Chiefs Council, employers from both LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the Home Office.

As part of Phase One, the first four Fire Standards have been developed and after passing quality assurance were launched on 16 February 2021 and will be subject to a period of consultation. There are:

- (1) Emergency Response Driver Training
- Operational Response
 - (2) Operational Competence
 - (3) Operational Preparedness
 - (4) Operational Learning

187.4 Fire Standards cont.

The CFO referred Members to Appendix B which outlined the Phase Two fire standards delivery plan. He reported that these proposals will now be impacted by new drivers including: Learning from the FRS response to Covid; HMICFRS Covid Response and State of Fire reports 2021; Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Phase Two recommendations; and Fit for the Future.

Councillor Woodhead welcomed the establishment of a suite of Fire Standards to provide assurance for communities and hoped this would influence the Authority securing a fairer government grant settlement in the future.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

188. REPORT OF THE LEGAL ADVISER AND MONITORING OFFICER

188.1 Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

The 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 Treasurer outlined the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 at Appendix 1 and highlighted the remuneration of the lowest paid employees which was:

- Firefighter (Development) - £25,323
- Non-operational employees Grade B (Development) - £18,933

He reported that the Government's National Living Wage sets a minimum wage for all workers aged 25 years and over which equates to £17,191, which was lower than the Authority's lowest paid employees Grade B (Development) which was £18,933.

RECOMMENDED:-

- (i) **That Cleveland Fire Authority's Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be considered and approved at its meeting on 26 March 2021.**
- (ii) **That the Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be published by the Authority, once approved.**

189. 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 paragraph 3 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 financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority) holding that information."

190. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 22 January 2021 be confirmed.

191. CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

191.1 Procurement Update Report

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

191.2 Provision of Security Services – Tender Acceptance

Members examined the result of the Brigade analysis of the tenders received for the Provision of Security Services.

**COUNCILLOR PAUL KIRTON
CHAIR**