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# CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

## MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING

17 FEBRUARY 2017

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**PRESENT:**

**HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Cllrs Rob Cook, Marjorie James, Ray Martin-Wells

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**

Cllrs Jan Brunton, Naweed Hussain, Tom Mawston

**REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Cllrs Neil Bendelow, Norah Cooney, Brian Dennis, Mary Ovens

**STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Cllrs Gillian Corr, Paul Kirton, Jean O'Donnell, Mick Stoker, William Woodhead MBE

**AUTHORISED OFFICERS**

Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer, Treasurer

**BRIGADE OFFICERS**

Director of Corporate Services, Director of Community Protection

**APOLOGIES:**

Chief Fire Officer

Cllr Teresa Higgins, Middlesbrough Council

**85. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTEREST**

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

**86. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Meeting on 14 October 2016 be confirmed.**

**87. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Audit & Governance Committee Meeting on 11 November 2016, Executive Committee Meetings on 25 November 2016 and 20 January 2017 and Executive Tender Awarding Meetings on 14 December 2016 and 20 January 2017 be confirmed. The minutes of the Local Pension Board Meeting on 8 November 2016 were noted.**

**88. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR**

Daniel Greaves - Operational Statistics  
- Fire Revenue New Dimensions & Firelink Grant to FRS

Brandon Lewis - Fire Service Reform must go Further Faster  
- Next Steps for Fire Reform – Speech  
- Policing & Crime Act 2017: Emergency Services Collaboration  
- Efficiency Plans – Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement Announcement  
- The Thomas Review

Gill Gittins - Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations  
- Co-responding and wider work trials

**88. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR cont.**

- Clair Alcock
- Pension Regulator Survey
  - Firefighters (England) Scheme Advisory Board Update
  - Informal View: Income Tax & National Insurance Implications

**RESOLVED – that the communications be noted.**

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

**89.1 Draft Service Plan Priorities 2017/18**

The Director of Corporate Services informed Members that the draft Service Plan Priorities for 2017/18 had stemmed from three main sources:

- CIRMP 2014-18 Year 4 Proposals
- CIRMP 2018-22
- Corporate proposals identified by the Executive Leadership Team as a result of strategic risk assessment.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 and the following draft priorities 2017/18 were covered in detail:

- OD12 New complex on Queens Meadow Business Park consisting of Administrative HQ, Fire Control, Learning & Development Centre, and Asset Resource Centre
- OD15/16 Efficiency Plan Revenue Budget 2017/18
- ER1 Implement Emergency Response: Industrial & Commercial
- ER3 Major Estate Rebuild & Refurbishment Programme
- (iii) Build a New Community Fire Station at Thornaby
  - (iv) Build a New Community Fire Station at Grangetown
  - (v) Refurbish Stranton Community Fire Station
  - (vi) Refurbish Guisborough Community Fire Station
  - (vii) Refurbish Loftus Community Fire Station
- ER9 Prepare for the introduction of Retained Duty System Crewing Arrangements for the Second Fire Engine at Thornaby and Grangetown Fire Stations.
- C1 Strategic Planning and Community Integrated Risk Management Plan 2018/19 – 2021/22
- C2 Operational Configuration
- EC1 Thornaby Fire Station – Collaboration with Cleveland Police
- EC2 Redcar Fire Station – Collaboration with the Maritime Coastguard Agency
- EC3 Incident Command Unit – Collaboration with Cleveland Police
- EC4 Fleet Maintenance – Collaboration with Cleveland Police
- EC5 Drones – Collaboration with Cleveland Police
- EC6 Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) Scheme – Collaboration with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and the North East Fire and Rescue Service
- EC7 Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme – Collaboration
- EC8 Community Safety Services – Collaboration with Cleveland Police
- EC9 Tackling Vulnerability; Building Resilience – Collaboration with the National Health Service, Public Health and Social Care
- AT1 Performance Framework
- AT2 Community Engagement
- WR1 Workforce Strategy
- WR2 Values
- WR3 Apprenticeships

**89.1 Draft Service Plan Priorities 2017/18 cont.**

The Director of Community Protection (DoCP) referred to the Emergency Medical Response (EMR) trial at priority EC6 and reported that the trial was due to finish and an outcome was being awaited from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) recall conference as to whether they would support firefighters continuing to deliver this service.

Councillor James referred to priority WR3 - Apprenticeships and suggested running an apprenticeship programme across all Emergency Services to give a degree of commonality and then allow individuals to specialise.

Councillor James also referred to EC8 – Community Safety Services – Collaboration with Cleveland Police and suggested pursuing a scheme whereby vulnerable people at risk of going missing are given a pendent/bracelet with GPS to allow them to be tracked.

Councillor Kirton asked for clarification regarding where the water response team will be based while Stockton Fire Station is being rebuilt. The DoCP confirmed this would remain at Thornaby Fire station with 5 trained staff and be available 24/7.

Councillor Ovens asked for an update relating to Retained Recruitment at Redcar Fire Station. The DoCP confirmed that the Brigade had not yet achieved a full complement of staffing but transitional funding was available to cover three whole time riding positions on that appliance. He confirmed that 9 retained firefighters were appointed with an additional 19 being held on file.

Councillor Ovens asked for an update regarding plans for shared estate at Saltburn Fire Station. The DoCP confirmed that the refurbishment of Saltburn was still going ahead in line with the Brigade's Estates Programme but no longer involved shared accommodation with Cleveland Police.

Councillor Dennis asked how the Brigade had measured the success of the EMR trial and asked why the FBU did not want it. The DoCP confirmed that anecdotal evidence had been gathered from the 2,500 incidents attended and work had also been commissioned by Teesside University to evaluate the trial. In addition, a research team headed by Professor Julia Williams would be evaluating whether the trial had been a success on a national level. In relation to the FBU, he reported that historically it had not supported co-responding and it was to be done on a voluntary basis. They did however lift their blocking of this to allow the EMR trial to go ahead.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That Members considered and approved the Draft Service Plan Priorities 2017/18, attached at Appendix 1, to be included in the Authority's Service Plan 2017/18 and published in April 2017.**

**89.2 Information Pack**

- 90.2.1 Employers Circulars
- 90.2.3 Campaigns

**RESOLVED – that the information pack be noted.**

**90. JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER**

**90.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 – 2019/20 and Council Tax Setting**

The Treasurer outlined the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in relation to the 2017/18 Budget and Council Tax Setting which covered:

- Government Funding Cuts 2013/14 and 2019/20
- 2016/17 Outturn Strategy
- Update on Forecast Resources 2017/18 to 2019/20
- Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund
- Revenue Support Grant
- Business Rates Income and Top Up Grant
- Summary of Forecast Resources 2017/18
- Update of Forecast Budget Deficits 2017/18 to 2019/20 and Strategy for Managing Deficits
- Financial Outlook 2020/21 – Reform of Local Government Funding System

The Treasurer noted that the 2017/18 Council Tax referendum threshold for Fire and Rescue Authorities will continue at 2% and it is anticipated that this limit will also apply for 2018/19 and 2019/20. This confirms that the annual Council Tax increases of 1.9% built into the MTFS can be implemented without holding a Council Tax referendum.

The Treasurer reported that the CFO was continuing to manage budgets extremely carefully, including holding posts vacant to facilitate the achievement of budget reductions over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20. He reported that following a recent updated assessment a forecast managed under spend of £0.5m is expected at the year end.

The Chair noted that the Treasurer was awaiting confirmation of settlement grant figures from DCLG and queried whether this would be a legal budget setting. The Legal Adviser and Monitoring Officer (LAMO) confirmed that this had been considered and did not affect the Authority's budget setting.

The LAMO asked Members to vote on the recommendations of the Executive Committee. Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) That the action taken by the Chief Fire Officer to achieve a 2016/17 managed under spend be noted and the allocation of these one-off resources to fund increased pension costs of £0.160m over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 and the remaining £0.340m to manage financial risk arising from the future implementation of 100% Business Rates retention, be approved.**
- (ii) That the allocation of the additional 2017/18 one off Collection Fund surplus of £126,000 to also help manage financial risk arising from the future implementation of 100% Business Rates retention, be approved.**
- (iii) That Members noted the Authority's application for a multi-year settlement offer had been approved by the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, as detailed in Appendix A.**

**90.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 – 2019/20 and Council Tax Setting cont.**

- (iv) That the MTFs forecasts based on the CIRMP savings proposals approved by the Authority on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016, as summarised in paragraph 6.5, be noted.
- (v) That a 2017/18 Council Tax increase of 1.9%, which equates to a Band D Council Tax of £73.06, and supporting statutory calculations detailed in Appendix F, which includes the following Council Tax levels, be approved:

| Property Band | 2017/18                 |                         | Annual increase<br>£ |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
|               | Annual Council Tax<br>£ | Weekly Council Tax<br>£ |                      |
| A             | 48.71                   | 0.94                    | 0.91                 |
| B             | 56.82                   | 1.09                    | 1.05                 |
| C             | 64.94                   | 1.25                    | 1.21                 |
| D             | 73.06                   | 1.41                    | 1.36                 |
| E             | 89.30                   | 1.72                    | 1.67                 |
| F             | 105.53                  | 2.03                    | 1.96                 |
| G             | 121.77                  | 2.34                    | 2.27                 |
| H             | 146.12                  | 2.82                    | 2.72                 |

Approximately 65% of households are in a Band A or B property compared to 44% nationally

- (vi) That the 2017/18 revenue budget as detailed in Appendix D, be approved.
- (vii) That Members noted the approved capital programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19 which had been updated to reflect re-phased capital expenditure and which was within the approved capital budget allocation, as detailed in Appendix E.

**91. REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

**91.1 Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18**

The Treasurer informed Members that the Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 had been scrutinised by the Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting on 11 November 2016 and there were no significant changes to report other than those set out in the recommendations. Councillor Dennis asked for clarification as to why the Authority banked with Svenska Handelsbanken. The Treasurer confirmed that it had struggled to find a bank that was safe to invest in and this was a traditional foreign bank without an investment arm.

**RESOLVED:- that the report be noted and the following recommendations from the Audit and Governance Committee for the 2017/18 Treasury Management Strategy and related issues be approved:**

91.1 Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 cont.

(i) Investment Strategy

- a. That the Counterparty Limit for Svenska Handelsbanken be increased from £1m to £2m.
- b. That the Counterparty Limit for County, Metropolitan or Unitary Councils be increased from £2m to £3m.
- c. That the Counterparty Limit for District Councils, Police or Fire Authorities be increased from £1m to £1.5m.
- d. That the Counterparty limits as set out in Appendix 1 paragraph 9.8, which incorporates the above recommendations (a) to (c).

(ii) Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

That the MRP statement outlined in Appendix 1 paragraph 10.2 be approved.

(iii) Prudential Indicators 2017/18

That the prudential indicators detailed in Appendix 2 be approved.

92. **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 items of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 5 below 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 and namely information relating to any 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.

93. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the Confidential Minutes of the Cleveland Fire Authority Ordinary Meeting on 14 October be confirmed.

94. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED** – that the confidential minutes of the Executive Committee Tender Awarding meetings on 14 December 2016 and 20 January 2017 and the Executive Committee meeting on 20 January 2017 be confirmed.

95. **CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

95.1 **Part Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations – Fire Brigades Union and Retained Fire Fighters Union Settlement Agreements**

The LAMO updated Members on issues relating to fire service pension matters and the situation on the tax treatment of settlement awards.

**COUNCILLOR JAN BRUNTON**  
**CHAIR**