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# CLEVELAND FIRE AUTHORITY

## MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

26 JANUARY 2018

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**PRESENT:**           **CHAIR**  
Councillor Jan Brunton Dobson – Middlesbrough Council  
**HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
Councillor Marjorie James (Sub)  
**REDCAR & CLEVELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
Councillors Norah Cooney (Sub), Mary Ovens  
**STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
Councillors Jean O'Donnell, Mick Stoker (Sub)  
**AUTHORISED OFFICERS**  
Chief Fire Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Legal Adviser &  
Monitoring Officer, Treasurer

**APOLOGIES:**       Councillor Rob Cook – Hartlepool Borough Council  
Councillor Tom Mawston – Middlesbrough Council  
Councillor Ray Goddard – Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council  
Councillor William Woodhead – Stockton Borough Council

In accordance with Standing Order No. 35, Councillor James substituted for Councillor Cook, Councillor Cooney substituted for Councillor Woodhead and Councillor Stoker substituted for Councillor Goddard.

**83.    DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

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

**84.    MINUTES**

**RESOLVED - that the Minutes of the Executive Committee on 24 November 2017 be confirmed.**

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

**85.1   HMICFRS Proposed Fire & Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework 2018/19**

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) informed Members that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had issued a draft Fire and Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework for consultation, as attached at Appendix A.

He reported that the programme sought to enable HMICFRS to draw together evidence from inspections of all 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England. This will cover the efficiency and effectiveness of each service and how it looks after its people by assessing:-

### 85.1 HMICFRS Proposed Fire & Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework 2018/19 continued

- The operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection, resilience and response)
- The efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with the police and ambulance services)
- The organisational effectiveness of the service (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce and develops leadership and service capability)

The CFO reported that the resulting assessments would include graded judgements of performance (outstanding, good, requires improvement, inadequate) and be designed to allow the public to see how fire and rescue service performance changes over time in relation to the performance of other services.

The CFO referred Members to the seven questions contained within the consultation detailed at paragraph 5.1 of the report and informed Members that the Authority was to be inspected in the third tranche programmed for Summer 2019. He added that the Authority falls into the North region which is currently in the process of appointing an inspector. The Chair agreed to extend an invitation to the new inspector to visit Cleveland to meet Members once appointed.

The CFO confirmed that all Members had already received a copy of the draft inspection programme and framework and a reminder would be circulated to invite comments for inclusion in the response.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the draft Fire and Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework 2018/19 be noted.**
- (ii) that a response incorporating Members' views be approved by the Chair and submitted before the consultation deadline of 19 February 2018.**

### 85.2 Fire & Rescue National Framework for England: Government Consultation

The CFO informed Members that the Government had issued the draft Fire and Rescue Framework for England document for consultation from 27 December 2017 to 14 February 2018 which had been fully revised and aimed at embedding the fire reform programme. This included the creation of a new inspectorate for fire and rescue services, the creation of a National Fire Chief Council, a provision in the Policing & Crime Act on Emergency Services collaboration and changes to fire and rescue governance.

The CFO referred Members to the Framework, attached at Appendix A, and reported that it was difficult to disagree with the priorities set but clearly needed to be more outcome focused with evidence-based evaluation. He highlighted areas for feedback which included :-

**85.2 Fire & Rescue National Framework for England: Government Consultation continued**

Paragraph 2.6 - whether targeting vulnerability is considered a 'core function'

Paragraph 5.1 - clearer definition of 'regularly review'

Paragraph 5.7 - the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) should refer to multiple years – this would be difficult to achieve as authorities never have more than two years' information available

Paragraphs 5.22 - 5.24 - clarification on definition of a 'trading company' as the current description does not cover the Authority's community interest company (CIC).

Paragraph 23 - including 'broadening role' in basic firefighters role map. Could argue same for emergency medical response (EMR)

Councillor James referred to recently received correspondence from the Authority's fire engineering department regarding a planning application for a local school which did not include sprinklers. She suggested the Authority's response to the Framework consultation should include making the fire and rescue service a consultee on all planning committees. She suggested some commentary be included referring to the potential national/local efficiencies that could be achieved from including sprinklers in new/adapted public buildings by driving down the cost of insurance and damage limitation in the event of a fire. The CFO agreed this could be included in the 'Lessons from Grenfell' section of the consultation.

Councillor Ovens noted there was no mention of rescue and collaboration and referred to the Brigade's assistance at flooding incidents in East Cleveland over recent years. She added that these services were very much part of what the Brigade delivered and came at a financial cost to the Authority.

The CFO reported that a copy of the draft Framework had been sent to all Members and views were being sought to shape the Authority's response which would be drafted by the CFO and approved by the Chair by the deadline of 14 February 2018.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (i) that the draft Fire and Rescue National Framework for England issued by the Government for consultation at Appendix A be noted.**
- (ii) that a draft response incorporating Members views, as detailed above, be approved by the Chair of the Fire Authority and submitted by the consultation deadline of 14 February 2018.**

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

**86.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update**

The Treasurer presented Members with an update of the MTFS reflecting the provisional 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement announcement. The update covered:

- 2017/18 Forecast Outturn
- Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement Announcement 2018/19
- Core Spending Power

**86.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update continued**

- Business Rates Retention
- Fair Funding Review
- Impact of December 2017 announcements on the MTFS
- Short Term Impact - 2018/19 and 2019/20
- Medium Term Impact 2020/21
- Capital Programme Review
- Review of Reserves and advice on robustness of the budget proposals

The Treasurer reported that the four year settlement confirmed that Government funding received by the Authority would continue to reduce until 2019/20 meaning the Authority will have faced 9 successive years of Government funding cuts. As a result the 2019/20 budget will be approximately £7.3m less than in 2010/11, a cash reduction of approximately 22%.

The Treasurer highlighted the following key issues of the settlement:

- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) 2018/19 and 2019/20 - confirmation of these cuts means the Authority will have to implement the planned 2018/19 and 2019/20 budget cuts.
- Council Tax Referendum limit 2018/19 and 2019/20 - the Government has increased the core Council Tax referendum limit from 2% to 3% to recognise the financial pressures facing local authorities. The Treasurer confirmed that for this Authority the additional Council Tax flexibility equates to additional recurring income in 2018/19 of approximately £111,000 and a further additional recurring income of £113,000 in 2019/20.

The Treasurer reported that on the basis of continuing cuts in Government funding the Authority faces a budget shortfall of £3.9m over the period 2016/17 to 2019/20. The overall shortfall includes £1.881m of savings still to be achieved in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the draft Community Integrated Risk Management Plan (CIRMP) detailed proposals to achieve these savings.

Councillor James asked if there was a facility for non-collection of council tax and asked whether this is recorded in the Authority's accounts. The Treasurer confirmed that each of the four constituent authorities set a council tax base and makes an assessment of non-collection for that year. He confirmed that the Section 151 officers' assessments were never exact and the Fire Authority would pick up its share of the variance.

The Chair thanked the CFO and Treasurer for producing a robust strategy.

**RECOMMENDED:-**

- (i) **That the increase in the core Council Tax referendum limit from 2% to 3% for 2018/19 and 2019/20 by the Government be noted.**

86.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update continued

- (ii) Members noted that the provisional 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement states that “in recognition of higher than expected inflation and pressures on services such as social care and policing, the Government has decided to make changes to the Council Tax referendum principles”
- (iii) That a 2018/19 Council Tax increases of 2.9% increase, which will result in the following Council Tax levels be recommended for approval by the Fire Authority:

2017/18		2018/19		
Weekly Council Tax £	Property Band	Annual Council Tax £	Weekly Council Tax £	Annual increase £
0.94	A	50.12	0.96	1.41
1.09	B	58.47	1.12	1.65
1.25	C	66.83	1.29	1.89
1.41	D	75.18	1.45	2.12
1.72	E	91.89	1.77	2.59
2.03	F	108.59	2.09	3.06
2.34	G	125.30	2.41	3.53
2.82	H	150.36	2.90	4.24

Approximately 65% of households are in Band A or B

- (iv) That an indicative 2019/20 Council Tax increase of 2.9% be recommended for approval, noting that a final decision will be made in February 2019 to reflect Government Council Tax referendum limits.
- (v) Members noted that recommendations (iii) and (iv) will secure £223,000 of recurring additional Council Tax income in 2019/20 to partly fund the recurring cost of pay awards for firefighters and green book support staff exceeding 1%.
- (vi) That savings detailed in paragraph 6.4 totalling £1.881m and phased as follows be recommended for approval:
- 2018/19 - £1.082m
  - 2019/20 - £0.779m
- (vii) That the principle of using the Budget Support Fund to temporarily fund higher pay awards in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 to provide a longer lead time to enable further forecast permanent budget reductions of between £119,000 and £564,000 to be identified and reported to a future meeting when details of pay awards have been finalised be recommended for approval.

**86.1 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update continued**

- (viii) **Members noted that recommendation (vii) will reduce the Budget Support Fund available to support the 2020/21 budget and the impact of 75% Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review (FFR) review to between £1.955m and £2.620m.**
- (ix) **Members noted that further savings may be required in 2020/21 depending upon the impact of 75% Business Rate Retention and the FFR.**
- (x) **Members noted that 2018/19 Business Rates income and Council Tax / Business Rates Collection Fund figures have not yet been received from the constituent authorities and that the proposal that any variance from the estimated forecasts should be transferred to, or from, the Budget Support Fund be recommended for approval.**
- (xi) **That the proposal to transfer the 2017/18 forecast manage underspend of £400,000 to the Budget Support Fund to help underpin the MTFS be recommended for approval.**

**87. 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 3, 4 & 7 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 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 and namely information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime."

**88. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - that the Confidential Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 24 November 2017 be confirmed.

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

**89.1 Community Integrated Risk Management Plan (CIRMP) 2018-22:  
Senior Management Review**

Members received details of a Senior Management Review.

**89.2 Replacement Human Resources Information System (HRIS)**

The DoCS updated Members on the progress of procuring a replacement Human Resources Information System.

**90. CONFIDENTIAL JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & TREASURER**  
**90.1 Modified Blue Light Emergency Response Vehicle Personal Tax Changes and future options.**

The CFO and Treasurer apprised Members on the personal tax changes for drivers of Modified Blue Light Emergency Response Vehicles.

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