

Minutes of the Meeting of
the TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND
RESCUE AUTHORITY held in the
Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Barmston Mere on
MONDAY 21 JULY 2014 at
10.00 a m.

Present:

Councillor T Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, M. Forbes, Haley, Harrison, Mole, Mortimer, Ord, Perry and Stephenson.

Part I

Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported that Penny Mordaunt MP had been appointed as the new Secretary of State to the Department for Communities and Local Government and a letter had been forwarded to her to arrange a meeting with her in relation to the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The attention of Authority Members was drawn to the recent strike action and the Chairman, on behalf of the Authority, thanked the Senior Management Team for all their hard work during this action and facilitating changes in working patterns.

Members were advised that Councillor Burdis had submitted her apologies due to illness and had been in hospital. The Chairman requested that a letter be sent to Councillor Burdis on behalf of the Authority to wish her a speedy recovery.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Bell to advise the Authority of the results of the 2014 LGBT North East Awards.

Councillor Bell reported that the Authority had been awarded the Building Inclusive Workplaces Award. The award, a prestigious handmade glass award, was displayed at the meeting. She congratulated the Authority stating that the ceremony itself was excellent. She also thanked staff for their efforts and for organising the event so well and congratulated all the award winners and nominees.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Burdis, N. Forbes, Padgett, Price, Renton and Stockdale.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

13. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the Authority, Part I held on 23 June 2014, Part I, be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 24 February 2014, Part I, be noted for information.

Member Links with Community Fire Stations

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) on a revised list of links between Members and the Community Fire Stations and departments within the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The Assistant Chief Officer (Community Safety) reminded Authority Members that this scheme had been set up in 2007 and had been successful in enhancing liaison and communication by providing for the exchange of local information relevant to the appropriate ward areas and promoting networking between Members, Officers and Local Ward Councillors.

The attention of Authority Members was drawn to the list appended to the report and the Assistant Chief Officer (Community Safety) advised that if the proposed list was approved arrangements would be made with the Authority Members to establish contact and arrange a programme of visits.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

14. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report and the proposed link arrangements set out in Appendix A be approved, and;
- (ii) the links between Authority Members and stations/departments be endorsed.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to provide an update on the current progress of the national ESMCP and to highlight the long term risks of its implementation on Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS).

The Assistant Chief Officer (Community Safety) in highlighting the report advised that the ESMCP was a national programme aimed at sourcing a replacement for the current communications system which was used by all emergency services and other supporting agencies in order to manage operational incidents. He explained that the current Firelink contract provided by Airwave Solutions Ltd (ASL) was due for renewal in 2016 however the last ASL / Police contracts did not end until 2020. The intention was to replace the current Airwave system with a new, modern and efficient emergency services communications system, which would offer both voice and data services in a more cost effective and efficient format including scope for further development.

Authority Members were advised implications for the Fire and Rescue Service arose as it was not clear if the Government were going to commit to continue supporting Airwave beyond the contractual obligations or whether it would be left to the individual Fire and Rescue Services to negotiate separate contracts or solutions until the new ESMCP commenced. The Tyne and Wear FRS was in the fourth rollout group with an anticipated transition date of late 2017/early 2018.

The Assistant Chief Officer (Community Safety) advised that the current network coverage was good in Tyne and Wear however with the migration to 4G technology some of the rural areas on the boundary might have poor reception. Therefore as part of the tender exercise solutions to this issue were being demanded. In addition he advised that consideration must also be given to the possibility of running the new system alongside the old one however there might not be sufficient capacity to be able to do this and also clarification was required in relation to the exact financial costs and transition costs from the DCLG.

The Assistant Chief Officer (Community Safety) reported that the situation would continue to be monitored and reported back to the Authority as the programme develops.

Councillor Harrison expressed concern in relation to the risks associated with the programme and suggested that this could be included in the topics to be discussed with the new Secretary of State.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Authority Members that the programme had been included in the Corporate Risk Profile to ensure that it was closely monitored. Signal coverage maps would be drawn up to identify weak spots and tests would be undertaken to identify new solutions.

In response to Councillor Haley's question on the potential gap period in the contracts facing Tyne and Wear, the Assistant Chief Officer (Community Safety) assured Authority Members that the existing contract would need to be extended. He advised that he would bring a further report detailing the timeframe once the high level negotiations had taken place.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

15. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and further updates be submitted to the Authority in the future.

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-2017

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Adviser submitted a joint report (circulated) to seek outline approval of 2 additional IRMP actions, to be carried out during the period 2014-17, namely in relation to the organisational review and joint/collaborative working with other emergency services and key partners.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that members of the management team had carried out briefings with staff across the Authority to identify potential actions and outline approval was sought for the inclusion of the two identified actions to be followed by a period of consultation. He advised that a further report on the outcomes of the consultation would be submitted to the Authority prior to a further round of consultation with those employees who would be directly impacted by the proposals.

Consideration having been given to the report, it was:-

16. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the programme of additional IRMP actions set out in section 3 of the report be approved,
- (ii) the approach to public and staff engagement and consultation set out in section 4 of the report be approved, and
- (iii) further reports on specific actions be received in due course.

Correspondence List

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a list of correspondence that had been received since the last meeting of the Authority, and were not subject to a separate report.

17. RESOLVED that the correspondence list be received for information

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006

18. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a likely disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or to consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 3 and 4).

(Signed) T WRIGHT
Chairman

Note:

The above minutes comprise those relating to items of business during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.

