



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 16 FEBRUARY 2015 at
10.30am.

Present:

Councillor T Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, M. Forbes, Haley, Lauchlan, Mortimer, Ord, Perry, Price Renton and Stockdale.

The Deputy Clerk to the Authority announced that 3 petitions had been received in relation to station closures.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Burdis, N. Forbes, Harrison and Stephenson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

59. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Authority, Part I, held on 19 January 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Designation of Finance Officer

The Clerk to the Authority submitted a report informing members that following the resignation of Malcolm Page, the former Finance Officer, Sonia Tognarelli had undertaken the role of Chief Finance Officer for Sunderland City Council under section 151 Local Government Act 1972, together with the role of Finance Officer for

the Authority under section 73 Local Government Act 1985, on an interim basis. Sunderland City Council had now made a permanent designation of Mrs. Tognarelli as Director of Finance for the purpose of section 151 of the 1972 Act and it was therefore recommended that the Authority also now make a permanent appointment in respect of the Finance Officer role.

60. RESOLVED that approval be given to the designation of Sonia Tognarelli as the Authority's Finance Officer and as the responsible officer under section 73 Local Government Act 1985.

Capital Programme 2015/2016 Including Prudential Indicators for 2015/2016 and 2017/2018

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority and Finance Officer submitted a joint report to present to Members the proposed Capital Programme for 2015/2016, including the Prudential Indicators for 2015/2016 to 2017/2018.

Members were advised that the proposed Capital Programme and Vehicle Replacement Programme for 2015/2016 totalled an estimated £5,301,852, including new starts of £1,927,100 (appendix A). This being in addition to £2,521,752 which was required to fund continuing projects and a further £853,000 to fund the proposed Vehicle Replacement Programme.

The Prudential Indicators were set out at Appendix B of the report and Members were, in accordance with regulation, specifically asked to approve the Authorised Limit for External Debt of £54.905m and the Operational Boundary for External Debt of £49.905m for the Authority for 2015/2016.

61. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Capital Programme and Vehicle Replacement Programme for 2015/2016 as set out in Appendix A be approved;
- (ii) the Prudential Indicators for the years 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 as set out in Appendix B, and specifically the Authorised Limit for External Debt of £54.905m and the Operational Boundary for External Debt of £49.905m for 2015/2016 be approved; and
- (iii) the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement set out in Section 2.12 of Appendix 1 be approved.

Revenue Budget 2015/2016 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/2016 and 2017/2018

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report to present for consideration and approval by members:

- the Revenue Estimates for 2015/2016;

- the Authority's Council Tax Requirement for 2015/2016;
- the Precept required to be levied on the District Councils in Tyne and Wear for 2015/2016, and
- an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy Statement for 2015/2016 to 2017/2018.

The Finance Officer advised members that the final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 3 February 2015 and remained unchanged from the position issued on 18 December that the Revenue Spending Power would reduce by £2.486m or 4.7% to £50.194m when compared to a national average reduction of 1.85%.

Members acknowledged that the Authority continued to face a disproportionately greater reduction in funding compared to most other Fire Authorities.

The Finance Officer then referred to the revenue budget and in doing so explained that the 2015/16 updated budget position had improved which meant that there was a reduced anticipated budget gap. The net budget requirement for 2015/2016 had been established at £49,652,920 with a Council Tax Freeze or £49,806,290 with a 1.99% increase in Council Tax. Members were asked to consider both options.

In doing so members commented on the funding gap and the need to protect the service. A small precept increase would help reduce this funding gap and the resultant cost pressures faced by the Authority.

62. RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised estimate for 2014/2015, as summarised at Appendix A be noted;
- (b) the proposed Revenue Estimates for 2015/2016, as summarised at Appendix A be approved;
- (c) the Projected Pensions Account 2015/2016 detailed at Appendix B be noted;
- (d) the associated risks and their mitigation as set out in Appendix C be noted;
- (e) the updated position on the General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves (Appendix D) be approved;
- (f) the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy Statement for 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 detailed at Appendix E be noted;
- (g) the Council Tax base of 271,577 (known as Item T) for the year 2015/2016, as notified by the billing authorities within Tyne and Wear under the new regulations be noted;

- (h) a 1.99% increase in Council Tax for 2015/2016 be approved;
- (i) the following amounts for the Authority for the year 2015/2016 which represents a 1.99% increase in Council Tax for 2015/2016, in accordance with Sections 42A to 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended be approved:

(i) £61,350,066 - being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(2)(a) to (d) of the Act;

(ii) £41,084,990 - being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(3)(a) to (b) adjusted for item of the Act;

(iii) £20,265,076 - being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year, Item R in the formula in Section 42B of the Act;

(iv) £74.6200 - being the amount at (iii) (Item R) above divided by the Council Tax Base (Item T), calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(v) **Valuation Bands**

£

A	49.7467	being the amount given by multiplying the
B	58.0378	amount at (iv) above by the number which, in
C	66.3289	the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act,
D	74.6200	is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular
E	91.2022	valuation and divided by the number which that
F	107.7844	proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in
G	124.3667	valuation band D, calculated by the Authority in
H	149.2400	accordance with Section 47(1) of the Act, as the
		amounts to be taken into account for the year in
		respect of categories of dwellings listed in
		different valuation bands.

- (j) It be noted that under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act, the Authority's relevant basic amount of council tax for 2015/2016 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined under Section 52ZC(1) of the Act (i.e. no referendum is required).

- (k) It be approved that in accordance with Section 40 of the Local

Government Finance Act 1992, the billing authorities within the area of this authority be issued with precepts in the amount of £20,265,076 for the financial year beginning 1st April 2015, the amount of the respective precepts to be issued to each billing authority's area in accordance with Sections 42A to 48 of the 1992 Act.

Councillor Mole moved, seconded by Councillor Price to suspend Standing Orders B5 and B22 and accordingly it was: -

63. RESOLVED that Standing Orders B5 and B22 be suspended for the following item of business only to allow the consideration of a motion.

The Chairman then referred to the motion the Authority passed at the February meeting in 2014 where it had been:

RESOLVED that the Chief Fire Officer be requested to bring forward an implementation plan for the IRMP which included the following considerations:

- That the IRMP implementation plan should be for a minimum three year period;
- That station closures would only be considered as a last resort;
- That any station closures should only be in final stages of the implementation plan;
- That the Fire Authority would revisit the IRMP annually in light of future financial settlements from Government;
- That the Fire Authority would continue to lobby Government and Opposition MPs for a fairer financial settlement; and
- That the Fire Authority would continue to explore additional sources of funding to alleviate its financial pressures.

The Chairman then reiterated the increase in council tax base which improved the Authority's budget by £330,000 and the previous decision to increase the council tax precept by 1.99%, again improving the long term budget of the Authority by £396,000 and as a result the following motion was proposed:-

The Fire Authority had approved the budget for 2015/2016 which had £726,000 built into it from changes in council tax base and precept, therefore it was proposed that the Authority authorise the CFO to change the implementation plan for the Response Review, to implement option 1 only, removing any station closures from the plan.

Option 1

- **Crew appliances at stations with 1 fire appliance with 4 staff**
- **Remove six main fire appliances across the service (a reduction from 30 to 24)**
- **Introduce 2 Targeted Response Vehicles (TRVs) for lower risk incident 24/7**
- **Introduce 2 additional TRV to be dual staffed at night and as required**
- **Remove 2 fire appliances for up to 12 hours at night**

- **Reduce Aerial Ladder Platforms from 3 to 2**
- **Invest in new fire-fighting technologies to enhance performance and Firefighter safety.**

Upon discussion it was:

64. RESOLVED that the motion be carried and that option 1 only be implemented thereby removing the station closures from the plan.

DCLG/CFOA Urban Search and Rescue Review

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report to inform Members of the outcome of the national review of UK Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability which was carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA).

Members were advised that DCLG had advised that they wished to maintain a capability sufficient to respond to identified risks whilst delivering an estimated efficiency saving of £2m. In addition, they had indicated that as the risk had reduced by a third that it was reasonable to expect some reduction in the current USAR capability and still maintain the relevant levels of resilience.

The Chief Fire Officer had received notification that TWFRAs would receive a reduction of £102,560 in the section 31 grant. Officers were therefore working locally and within CFOA to change how USAR was provided to minimise the impact of this reduction on services.

65. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Response Review Implementation: Phase 1 Monitoring

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report providing an update for Members on the implementation to date of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Review of Operational Response.

Members were advised that the report highlighted performance for the first six months of the implementation plan. Between July and December 2014 the Service attended 7,489 incidents. Across Tyne and Wear the average attendance time of the first appliance had decreased by 4 seconds when compared to the same period in the previous year.

Members were then advised that in order to complete phase 1, two pumping appliances would be stood down for up to 12 hours at night. In addition to this, Targeted Response Vehicles would also be introduced into the frontline fleet.

66. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The monitoring update on actions taken to date be noted; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

FireFighter Establishment

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer, Clerk to the Authority and Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report to provide an update to members on the Firefighter (Grey Book) Establishment and the projected leaver's profile.

Members were advised that over the last 3 years the profile of leavers had started to change, with a very small increase in resignations and some timing changes to retirements.

The retirement projections for the next 3 years provided sufficient flexibility to allow the Authority to continue to reduce the Grey Book establishment. Considering the projections, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that 20 Firefighters would be needed within the current year. The service would therefore focus on securing experienced, qualified Firefighters from other Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services and this programme would begin with immediate effect. The Finance Officer confirmed that finances were available to transfer experienced Firefighters to Tyne and Wear.

67. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

The Mental Health Challenge

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer, Clerk to the Authority and Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report to update Members on the Authority's acceptance into the Mental Health Challenge and seeking nominations for a Member Champion.

Members were reminded that the Challenge was initially only open to councils and excluded Fire and Rescue Authorities. At the HR Committee on 13 October 2014, Members requested an approach be made to the Partnership to extend involvement to the Authority.

As a result, the Partnership had now requested the Authority to nominate a mental health Member Champion which was a beacon for the Authority being the first to be accepted.

Councillor Bell extended her thanks to Officers on this marvellous piece of work commenting that it was yet another way of demonstrating how Tyne and Wear were the forefront of activity.

It was moved by Councillor Haley and seconded by Councillor Bell that Councillor Stockdale be nominated as a mental health Member Champion.

68. RESOLVED that:

- (i) Councillor Stockdale be nominated the mental health Member Champion;
and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

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

69. 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.