

Item No. 5 (i)

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, 28 MARCH 2011 at
10.30 am.

Present:

Councillor T. Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Charlton, Clare, Clark, M. Forbes, N. Forbes, Haley, Huscroft, Jordan, Mole, Renton, Trueman and Woodwark.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Boyes and Essl.

The Chairman commented upon the successes of the recent Annual Fire Conference of the Local Government Association (LGA), which was held in Gateshead on 8th and 9th March. He added that the event went really well and thanked all those who attended.

He then went on to thank those members of the authority who were leaving after the elections. He praised them for their support and wished them well for the future.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to item 10 (Estates Development Strategy – Purchase of Land) as a member of Gentoo and also Sunderland City Council.

Councillor M Forbes declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to item 10 (Estates Development Strategy – Purchase of Land) as a member of Sunderland City Council.

Councillors Bell, Charlton and Haley declared a personal interest in relation to item 9 (Future Options – FireControl) as members of the Regional Control Company (RCC).

Minutes

89. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority, Part I held on 28 February 2011, be confirmed and signed as a correct record;
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee, Part I, held on 21 February 2011, be noted for information; and
- (iii) the minutes of the Governance Committee held on 21 March 2011, be noted for information.

Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2011/12, Including Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2011/12 to 2013/2014

The Finance Officer submitted a report to present the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (including both borrowing and investment strategies) proposed for 2011/12 and to note the Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2011/12 to 2013/2014.

The Finance Officer advised members that there were no major changes being proposed to the overall Treasury Management Strategy in 2011/12 which maintained the prudent approach adopted by the Authority in previous years.

Referring members to paragraph 3.7 of the report he went on to explain that the current average rate of borrowing at 3.35% was low in comparison with other local authorities whilst the current rate earned on investments at 1.49% was higher than the overall benchmark rate. In addition debt rescheduling by the lead authority had achieved significant savings in interest charges.

Members thanked Sunderland City Council for their work on investments and prudent approach to borrowing.

90. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Annual Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies) be approved, and
- (ii) the prudential 'Treasury Management Indicators be approved.

The Future of Fire and Rescue Control Service in England

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority, Finance Officer and Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report advising members of the content of the consultation paper and proposing a draft response for consideration.

DCFO Hindmarch advised that the government had launched a consultation exercise in order to ascertain how to progress the matter, including how any limited funding available for Fire and Rescue Authorities should be prioritised. This consultation exercise was scheduled to run for approximately 12 weeks with responses required by 8 April 2011.

Members were referred to appendix 1 of the report which detailed the proposed response to CLG. The response addressed the following questions:-

Q1 Do you agree with the assessment of FireControl set out in Section 3? What lessons do you think we can learn from FireControl – both positive and negative?

Q2 Are resilience, enhanced technology and efficiency still as important today as they were when the FireControl project was initiated? If not what has changed?

Q3 Which aspects of resilience described in section 4 are most important for control services? Are there other aspects that are not mentioned here?

Q4 Do you think that there is a role for central government in supporting technical enhancements in fire and rescue control rooms – and, if so, what should this be?

Q5 Do you think that there is a role for central government in helping fire and rescue authorities to achieve greater efficiencies in the delivery of control services – and, if so, what should this be?

Q6 Which of these approaches (or combination of approaches) for the delivery of control services set out in section 5 would provide the best outcome for the fire and rescue community and the public?

Q7 Do you agree that the right funding priorities are set out in Section 6 and do you have any comments on the order in which these are presented?

Q8 Which of the technical options for Firelink would best meet fire and rescue service needs?

Members welcomed the thorough responses to each of the questions and commented that they hoped CLG took on board their views.

91. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the response to the consultation be approved, and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Integrated Risk Management Action Plan 2010/11 – End of year Update

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report to provide Members with an end of year update in respect of the implementation of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) actions for 2010/11, approved by the Authority in March 2010.

ACFO Brindle outlined progress made against each of the four actions as follows:-

- 1) Evaluation of the Retained Category 2 Appliance (Gateshead South CFS) – Consultation had been completed and Members agreed on 28 February that the appliance be removed from the operational fleet. The final implementation of this action would be 31 March.
- 2) Examine Low Activity Staffing Model – This review was presented to and agreed by Members on 24 January 2011 with final implementation planned for 2014.
- 3) Review Prevention and Education (Community Safety) – This review was complete and Members approved a revised structure and staffing model for Community Safety on 20 December 2010. The majority of changes had been implemented, with only a small number of posts to follow in 2011/12.
- 4) Review of back office functions – Reviews of Human Resources, Data and Information and Administration and Support Services were complete, and the revised timescale for the completion of all reviews was April 2011.

Councillor Mole commended the Service for the way in which the implementation of the Low Activity Staffing Model had been handled.

92. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the progress made in relation to the implementation of the 2010/11 IRMP actions that were included in the Strategic Community Safety Plan be noted, and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Correspondence List for Information

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

93. RESOLVED that the correspondence list be received for information.

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

94. 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 contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or information relating to consultations/negotiations in connection with any labour matter 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.

