

Item 5

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 30 APRIL 2012 at 11.30 am.

Present:

Councillor B Heron in the Chair

Councillors Ahad, Bell, M. Forbes, N. Forbes, Haley, Mole, Mulvenna, Padgett, Stephenson and Trueman.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Bell, Gambling, Ord, Renton and Watters.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

85. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority, Part I held on 26 March 2012, be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and

- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee, Part I held on 19 April 2012, be noted for information and approval be given to the following:-
 - (a) that two independent persons be appointed;
 - (b) that appointments be for two years, with a provision to extend for a further three years without re-advertisement;
 - (c) that a Panel comprising any four members of the Governance Committee be set up to shortlist and interview candidates and to make recommendations to the full Authority for appointment; and
 - (d) the Deputy Clerk, in consultation with the Finance Officer, be authorised to set the initial allowances and expenses for the Independent Persons and to take all necessary steps to progress their recruitment.

Referring to Item 3(ii) appended to the agenda 'Localism Act 2011 – The Amended Standards Regime', Elaine Waugh, advised that paragraph 2.3 of the report indicated that existing independent members of the Governance Committee would be ineligible however this was currently under review. If the transitional arrangements allowed the current independent Chair to apply, it would of course be inappropriate for him to be a member of the shortlisting panel, hence the amended recommendation to the effect that any four members of the Governance Committee may undertake this function.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Mulvenna, Ms. Waugh advised that shortlisting would be the responsibility of each authority, however discussions were taking place with Northumberland authority regarding sharing administrative costs of advertising.

The Diamond Jubilee Medal

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to inform the Authority of the details of the commemorative Medal in recognition of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee year to be distributed to members of the Armed Services, the Prison Service and the emergency services who meet specific criteria.

Members were advised that control room staff, corporate staff and those operational staff who were not and never have been dealing with emergencies were not eligible to receive the medal. In terms of Tyne and Wear, approximately 720 staff will be eligible to receive the medal. (Dealing with emergencies is defined by the Cabinet Office as being called to the scene of 999 response calls and personnel who are potentially placing themselves in danger).

Representations had been made through the National Joint Council to include control room staff in eligibility for the medal, however, the response reiterated that recipients must physically attend emergency incidents.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that control room staff had not been included in the medal and he requested that a letter be sent to all staff from the Authority to acknowledge and recognise their invaluable contribution within the organisation.

Councillor N. Forbes also suggested that a letter be sent directly to the Culture Secretary expressing disappointment that control room staff had not been included in commemorating the special occasion and rewarding people who dedicate their lives to the public good. What should have been an instance of inclusion had instead become divisive, against the culture of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

86. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) Letters be sent to members of staff to acknowledge their contribution to the Authority and also to the Culture Secretary to express disappointment with regard to the eligibility criteria for control room staff; and
- (ii) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate

(Signed) B HERON
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.

