

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 26 MARCH 2012 at
10.30 am.

Present:

Councillor B Heron in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Gambling, Haley, Mole, Mulvenna, Ord, Renton, Stephenson and Trueman.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors N Forbes, M Forbes, Padgett and Watters.

Declarations of Interest

The following Councillors declared a personal interest in the report below as a Member of the body indicated:-

Item 4 – Review of
Members’ Allowances
Scheme by the Independent
Remuneration Panel

All Councillors present

Councillor

Item 9 – Command and
Control – The Future

Councillors Bell and
Haley

North East Fire Control
Company

Minutes

76. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority, Part I held on 20 February 2012, be confirmed and signed as a correct record;
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Appointments Committee, Part I held on 9 February 2012, be noted for information; and
- (iii) the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee, Part I held on 13 February 2012, be noted for information subject to the inclusion of Councillor Renton within the attendance.

Review of Members' Allowances Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report to present the Independent Remuneration Panel's report for consideration.

Members were advised of the saving of £6,399 due to the discontinuance of the Civil Contingencies Committee. The Panel did not recommend any changes to the responsibilities for which allowances were paid or the level of allowances. On this occasion, the Panel had also recommended that there was no provision for an automatic indexation increase to be included in the scheme and therefore any increase should follow further consideration by the Panel.

77. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted, the recommendations of the Panel be accepted and with effect from 1 April 2012, the existing scheme be revoked and a new scheme implemented reflecting the Panel's recommendations, such scheme to apply until further review and consideration by the Authority.

Localism Act 2011 – Pay Transparency

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report to set out the pay transparency implications of the Localism Act 2011 and recommending for approval the draft Pay Policy Statement, for subsequent publication by 31 March 2012.

Members were advised that the Authority was required to produce an annual pay policy statement starting with 2012/13, setting out authorities' policies for the financial year in relation to the remuneration of their senior staff/chief officers, the remuneration of their lowest-paid employees, and the relationship between the pay of chief officers and that of other employees.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer highlighted that the current pay multiples for the Chief Fire Officer and lowest paid employee was 11.25:1 which was well within the

Government expectation that the pay multiple relationship should be below 20:1 in local government. The Authority was therefore doing well.

The proposed draft Pay Policy Statement was appended to the report, and it was proposed that a review of the statement was undertaken by officers no later than September 2012.

In response to a question from the Chair, members were reminded that whilst there were no apprentices currently employed, one may be recruited as a result of the back office review. The apprentice would be paid the standard rate, which was applicable across the country.

78. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the draft Pay Policy Statement for publication by 31 March 2012 be approved; and
- (ii) further reports be received as necessary.

Treasury Management – Third Quarterly Review of Performance 2011/2012

The Finance Officer submitted a report on the Treasury Management performance for the third quarter of 2011/2012.

The Finance Officer advised Members that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken in 2011/2012 as rates had not been considered sufficiently favourable, but interest on borrowing was very low, currently averaging 3.42% and continued to benefit from past rescheduling exercises.

As at 31 December 2011 a rate of return on investments of 0.80% was achieved compared with the benchmark rate of 0.37%. Performance was therefore extremely positive and the Authority had been ranked in the top quartile.

As a result the increased rate of return on investments had generated additional interest of £0.084 million to date.

79. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Treasury Management performance for the third quarter of 2011/2012 be noted; and
- (ii) the amendments to both the Lending List Criteria set out in Annex A and the Lending List set out in Annex B be approved.

Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2012/2013, Including Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015

The Finance Officer submitted a report to inform the Authority of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (including both borrowing and investment strategies) proposed for 2012/2013 and to note the Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 and to provide comments to the Authority on the proposed policy and indicators where appropriate.

The Finance Officer advised the Authority that there were no major changes being proposed to the overall Treasury Management Strategy in 2012/2013 which maintained a prudent approach adopted in previous years.

Members were referred to page 65 which detailed the Treasury Management Policy Statement and subsequently the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Appendix 3).

It was highlighted that the authorised borrowing limit determined for 2012/2013 was £55.640 million.

With regards to Lending List Criteria, Members were reminded that the Authority would only place funds with those companies classified as Triple A. The UK had just achieved Triple A status and no funds were currently placed with foreign companies. Members acknowledged that this was a prudent approach.

80. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Annual Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2012/2013 (including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies) be approved; and
- (ii) the Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2012/2013 to 2014/2015 be approved.

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to inform the Authority of the result of the Stonewall 2012 Workplace Equality Index (WEI) Top 100 Employers and to provide details of the Authority's standing in the index.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised members that the Authority had been placed 60th, an impressive increase of 41 places. The Authority also secured the prestigious title of joint number one Fire and Rescue Service in the country, alongside West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In 2012, there were a number of changes made to the WEI. The Index criteria was fully revised and updated to include the new provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

The entry score into the Top 100 list was 130 points and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was pleased to report that the Authority successfully scored 148 points. Stonewall advised that this was an excellent achievement particularly given the changes to the index and increased competition.

Members congratulated the staff involved on this achievement and welcomed a future report on any areas for improvement.

81. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;

- (ii) support be given to continued commitment to Stonewall; and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Command and Control – The Future

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report to inform Members of the progress being made with regard to the command and control replacement project.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised members that following the submission of a comprehensive bid for grant funding, the Government had approved such funding to the amount of £1.8m. The bid made a joint endeavour with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and it was understood that they had also been awarded a further £1.8m.

Members were informed that the implementation of the new command and control system could take up to three years and a joint procurement process commenced with an entry being made in the European Journal asking for expressions of interest by 4 November 2012.

Five consortia had been invited to tender with 16 April 2012 being the closing date for tender return.

In response to a question from Councillor Haley, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the consortia were capable of delivering to the required specifications and one had already delivered the project in Wales.

Councillor Renton questioned where the Control Centres would be located and was advised that one was likely to be located in Tyne and Wear and one in West Hertford.

82. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) It be noted that the Authority had been awarded grant funding of approximately £1.8m to fund the project; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Correspondence List

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.

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

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

84. 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) 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.