

Minutes of the Meeting of the TYNE
AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY held in the Fire and Rescue
Headquarters, Barmston Mere, Sunderland
on MONDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2009 at
10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor T. Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Boyes, Charlton, Clark, M. Forbes, N. Forbes, Haley, Jordan,
Renton, Scaplehorn and Woodwark.

In Attendance:-

Steve Nicklin – District Auditor (Audit Commission)

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bollands and McIntyre.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Members acknowledged that Councillor Bollands was still not well and agreed to send their best wishes to him.

Minutes

112. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 23rd February, 2009 – Part I (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Civil Contingencies Committee held on 9th March, 2009, Part I (circulated) be received and noted.

Annual Audit and Inspection Letter to Members – Audit 2007/2008

Steve Nicklin was in attendance for this item of business.

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) providing Members with an overview of the content of the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2007/2008 compiled from the findings arising from the various audits they had undertaken during 2007/2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Steve Nicklin outlined the key messages contained in the Audit Letter which were that Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority had been assessed as 'Improving Well' with the Authority's overall performance being at the high end of this category. ,

It was also acknowledged that the Authority contributed to wider community outcomes via effective partnership working and used this involvement to identify communities who were at risk and the Authority was judged to be Performing Strongly with regard to the Use of its Resources assessment. A particular achievement worth highlighting was that the Audit Commission had identified notable practice in relation to the quality of the financial planning and reporting processes and the arrangements for producing year end accounts.

Areas that could be improved included:-

- to be more explicit in setting out the comprehensive benefits to the service that would arise from diversification of the workforce,
- updating procurement strategies in line with best practice and it also highlighted the issues contained within the Rising to the Challenge report, and
- the Regional Control Room project was identified as a key risk to the Authority and one that needed to be carefully monitored by Members.

At this juncture, the Chief Fire Officer recorded his appreciation to the Auditors for the manner in which the audit was undertaken and the assistance given in terms of the various projects carried out.

The Chairman of the Authority took the opportunity to congratulate both Members and staff on achieving such high standards and commented upon the usefulness of the auditor's letter and reports as a tool for scrutiny.

Upon discussion, it was:-

113. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the significant issues arising from the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2007/2008 had been considered and any impact upon future policies, not already being addressed had been determined, and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Steve Nicklin left the meeting at this juncture.

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2009/2012 and Annual Action Plan 2009/2010 – Report of Consultation

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report (circulated) outlining the results of the consultation exercise undertaken in respect of the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2009/2012 and accompanying 2009/2010 Annual Action Plan.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the public consultation exercise commenced on 22 September 2008 and ran for a period of 12 weeks. During this time consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders in order to seek their views on the proposals contained within the draft plan. Disappointingly there was a limited response to the consultation, with eight responses received from the web survey and 22 completed questionnaires submitted.

With regards to Citizens Panel Focus Groups 550 invitations to the focus groups were sent out but unfortunately only a total of 26 people attended the five meetings. Those who attended were generally supportive of proposals and agreed that the proposed actions would help make their communities a safer place to live in.

The Chief Fire Officer was impressed by the content of the submission from the Fire Brigade's Union (FBU) and had taken time to carefully consider the issues that were raised within the document. However, having taken into account a range of other concerns, in particular the impact of future cost pressures on the service he did not propose to amend any of the proposals in the IRMP.

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

114. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report had been considered; and

- (ii) the Draft IRMP 2009/2012 and Action Plan 2009/2010, be approved without amendment.

Draft Strategic Community Safety Plan 2009/2012

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) outlining the content of the draft Strategic Community Safety Plan 2009/2012 for consideration and approval by Members.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Plan had been specifically developed to deliver the Authority's four goals. These being to prevent loss of life and injury from fire and other emergencies, to respond appropriately to the risk, to plan and prepare for exceptional events, and to deliver a modern, effective service, ensuring Value for Money, with staff who reflected the communities they serve.

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

115. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Draft Plan be approved without amendment; and
- (ii) the Chief Fire Officer publish the Plan.

Proposed Amalgamation of the Performance Review Committee and Policy Advisory Committee

The Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) setting out, for the consideration of Members, a proposal to amalgamate the current Performance Review Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members were advised that whilst both Committees had played a valuable role in improving the overall performance of the Authority, it could be debated that the separation of their responsibilities into what were effectively 'backward looking' and 'forward looking' roles was not the most effective way in which they could be organised.

As a result, it was proposed that consideration was given to the two Committees being amalgamated and that the new Committee took on an enlarged responsibility for analysing past performance and, with the assistance of this management information, critically assessing proposed policy initiatives aimed at improving performance and/or addressing emerging challenges, whether these be internally or externally generated.

This matter had been considered by the Policy Advisory Committee who had concluded that the suggested merger was a sound proposal.

Upon discussion, it was:-

116. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the content of the report be noted;
- (ii) the associated recommendation of Policy Advisory Committee to amalgamate the Performance Review Committee and Policy Advisory Committee be endorsed; and
- (iii) the necessary changes take effect from the 15th June 2009 being the Authority's Annual Meeting.

Procurement of Aerial Appliance

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) setting out for the information of Members, the procurement arrangements in respect of an Aerial Appliance and seeking Authority approval to proceed with the award of a contract.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members were advised that included in the capital budget and vehicle replacement programme for 2009/10, was provision for the procurement of one Aerial Appliance. The Authority currently operated two types of Aerial Appliance, the Turntable Ladder (TTL), now due for replacement and Two Bronto Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALP). The purchase price for an ALP was £484,015 with the TTL estimated at £470,015.

TWFRA had two ALPs at present and it was proposed that the new appliance should also be an ALP, which replaced the only remaining TTL. Adopting this approach would produce a total projected efficiency saving of £35,717 over the 15 year life of the vehicle was projected.

Firebuy currently had in place a framework agreement for the supply of aerial appliances. A completed supplier response was received from Angloco Limited in the sum of £484,015.

In response to a question from Councillor M. Forbes, the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that standardising on ALP's would not result in any limitations to capacity.

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

117. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the procurement procedure adopted, which utilised a Firebuy framework agreement be endorsed; and
- (ii) the acceptance of the supplier response from Angloco Limited, Batley in the sum of £484,015 for the procurement of an Aerial Ladder Platform be approved.

Procurement of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) setting out for the information of Members, the tendering arrangements in respect of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and seeking Authority approval to proceed with the procurement of the equipment.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In accordance with the Firebuy Framework Agreement, an invitation to tender for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus was issued to the four suppliers included in the Agreement.

Subsequent evaluation resulted in Draeger Safety UK Ltd achieving the highest score based on the evaluation criteria and thus identified as the most economically advantageous tender. It was the recommendation of the project team, supported by the Chief Fire Officer, to procure Self Contained Breathing Apparatus from Draeger Safety UK Ltd, which would fully support a telemetry provision, at a cost of £312,665.00.

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

118. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the procurement procedure adopted, which utilised a Firebuy framework agreement be endorsed; and
- (ii) acceptance of the most economically advantageous tender from Draeger Safety UK Ltd, Blyth, in the sum of £312,665.00 for the procurement of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus be approved.

Procurement of Water Tenders 2009/2010 to 2011/2012

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) setting out for the information of Members, the procurement arrangements in respect of Water Tenders for the period 2009/2010 to 2011/2012 and seeking Authority approval to proceed with the award of a contract.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members were reminded that Firebuy currently had in place a framework agreement for the supply of Water Tenders.

The response from John Dennis Coachbuilders, Guildford was proposed for acceptance as not only the most economically advantageous but also the lowest response.

Upon discussion, it was:-

119. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the procurement procedure adopted, which utilised a Firebuy framework agreement be endorsed; and
- (ii) approval be given to the acceptance of the supplier response from John Dennis Coachbuilders, Guildford for up to 22 Water Tenders, at a cost of £173,830.57 each for Category 1 appliances and £173,081.04 each for Category 2 appliances.

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.

For copy report – see original minutes).

120. RESOLVED that the Correspondence List be received for information.

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

121. 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 information relating to any individual or information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual or information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3).

(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.

