

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, 29TH MARCH, 2010 at
10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor T. Wright in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Bell, Boyes, Charlton, Clare, Clark, M. Forbes, N. Forbes, Haley, Jordan, Mole and Woodwark.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mortimer, Renton and Scaplehorn.

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking that congratulations be forwarded to Mehrban Sadiq for receiving a National Diversity Award.

One minutes silence was then held for John Adamson (Of Durham and Darlington FRA and previously an employee of Tyne and Wear FRA) who had died unexpectedly. Thoughts of both Members and Officers were with his family at this very sad time.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

91. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 22nd February, 2010 – Part I be confirmed and signed as a correct record,
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resource Committee held on 1st March, 2010 – Part I be received and noted, and
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Civil Contingencies Committee held on 15th March, 2010 – Part I be received and noted.

Retirement of the Finance Officer

The Clerk to the Authority submitted a report asking Members to note the retirement of Keith Beardmore, Finance Officer to the Authority.

Mr. George Blyth had duly been re-designated as the officer with Section 151 responsibilities for the City Council to take effect from the retirement date of the Director of Financial Resources.

It was:-

92. RESOLVED that the designation of Mr. G. Blyth as the Authority's Finance Officer be agreed and the responsible officer under Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 31st March, 2010.

The Chairman took the opportunity to commend Mr Beardmore for his exemplary standard of work over the years and wished him well for the future. Mr Beardmore responded accordingly and thanked both members and officers for their support.

Integrated Risk Management Plan Annual Action Plan 2010/2011 – Report of Consultation

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Adviser to the Authority submitted a joint report outlining the results of the consultation exercise and asking Members to endorse the action plan for the 2010/2011 year.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members of the following four proposals:-

- Examine Low Level of Risk Staffing Models (LLAR) currently used by some other Fire and Rescue Services to see whether there are any benefits from using them at quieter stations, for example Sunderland South Community Fire Station.

- Carry out a full evaluation of the value, or otherwise, of maintaining the retained fire appliance based at Gateshead South Community Fire Station.
- Carry out a review of how our community fire safety resources are used and look at whether there are any efficiency savings which could be made through smarter working, improved targeting, increased partnership work and greater use of data.
- Carry out a review of the efficiency of back-office (support) functions to see what improvements and efficiencies could be made in the future. This work would follow on from the benchmarking review that was undertaken in 2009/2010.

Councillor N. Forbes welcomed the comprehensive nature of the IRMP process.

Following further consideration of the various consultation responses, It was:-

93. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the four actions contained within the report be endorsed, and
- (iii) further reports be received as necessary.

Equality and Diversity National Strategy

The Chief Fire Officer, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Adviser submitted a joint report to present the annual response to Communities and Local Government (CLG), in terms of the Authority's success against the national Equality and Diversity Strategy.

DCFO John Hindmarch outlined the report and referred Members to the evidential response requested by CLG, attached at Appendix A. This was submitted on 5th February, 2010.

Councillor Woodwark felt that this was a very positive report which showed the clear commitment of the Authority to Equality and Diversity issues.

It was:-

94. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the actions taken by the Chief Fire Officer be endorsed, and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Revised Environment Strategy

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a report seeking endorsement of the Strategy and the accompanying high level action plan.

ACFO Joy Brindle reminded Members of the 3 objectives of the Strategy, namely:-

- to use natural resources efficiently and reduce overall consumption (with a 22% reduction target in CO₂ emissions from April 2010 to March 2015);
- to reduce pollution and waste through management of operational activities, buildings and fleet;
- to promote engagement of the whole organisation in improving the environmental impact, and work with partners to improve environmental sustainability.

In response to a question asked by Councillor Woodwark in relation to whether accreditation would be pursued, ACFO Brindle advised that this would be unrealistic within the first year although it was being considered in future.

Councillor Clark went on to query why underground water capture systems were not used on PFI buildings. ACFO Brindle advised that they had not formed part of the specifications at the time but would look into the the technical issues relating to their installation.

It was:-

95. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Environmental Strategy and overall target for CO₂ emissions be approved, and
- (ii) regular updates on progress through quarterly performance reports be received.

Disposal of Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus Sets and Fire Appliances

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report setting out for the information and approval of Members, the proposed disposal arrangements for the Authority's old stock of compressed air breathing apparatus sets and associated ancillary equipment, together with two Volvo fire appliances.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that, as the items had no market value, he proposed to make the equipment and the vehicles available to the Kathmandu authorities in Nepal, which is a developing country. Members noted that shipping costs and any associated training costs would fall to either the Kathmandu local administration, the national government or a third party such as DFID or the United Nations OCHA. The Authority would not be liable for any of these costs.

The remaining sets would be disposed of through the Operation Florian project. This project provided a route through which equipment with no financial value in the developed world and which was due for disposal could be donated to developing countries that would benefit significantly from the provision.

Members felt this was an excellent idea. Councillor Mole suggested that a press release be produced advising of these decisions. In addition, Councillor N. Forbes proposed that a long term relationship with a third world country be established if possible, rather than working with them on an ad hoc basis.

It was:-

96. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the donation of approximately 40 SCBA sets and associated ancillary and the two fire appliances to Kathmandu Fire and Rescue Service, be approved, and
- (ii) the donation of the remaining SCBA sets and the associated ancillary equipment to the Operation Florian Project, be approved.

Emergency Planning Annual Conference and Exhibition 21st-23rd June 2010

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report requesting attendance at the Conference.

The Deputy Chief Emergency Planning Officer outlined the report and explained that this year's Conference, entitled 'A Decade of Disasters Take 2: Past, Present and Future' was scheduled to be held at The SECC, Glasgow on 21st-23rd June, 2010.

The Conference fee was £561 for EPS members and £660 for non EPS members. Accommodation and travel costs were not included in fees. Conference, travel and accommodation costs were normally covered by the members own authority.

The Deputy CEPO advised that Members were selected for the Conference on a rota basis. The next member to be offered a place was Councillor Charlton.

It was:-

97. RESOLVED that Councillor Charlton attend the Conference on behalf of the Authority.

EPU Quality Management Standard Renewals: ISO 9001/2000 and Investors in People (IIP)

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report updating Members on recent external assessments of the activity for both ISO 9001/2000 and Investors in People standards.

Members were advised that the assessor's comments regarding the high levels of moral and motivation were pleasing to note.

Two minor non conformances were identified. These were designed to enhance current systems and were not significant findings.

Councillor Bell, Chair of the Civil Contingencies Committee, felt these awards were excellent achievements for the unit and expressed her congratulations and best wishes to all staff involved.

It was:-

98. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the renewal of both quality standards 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.

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

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

100. 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 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.

