

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**



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 24 July 2023 at
10.30am.

Present:

Councillor Tye in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Dodds, Haley, Keegan, Kilgour, Patterson, Usher, Welsh, and Woodwark.

The Chair commented that he was pleased to see that Councillor Haley had made a good recovery.

Councillor Haley responded accordingly and explained that staff at all levels within the NHS had been absolutely fantastic as had the Police and Ambulance Service.

The Chair then referred to the recent challenging fire incidents around Newcastle, and on behalf of the Authority, paid credit to the Firefighters and the Service as a whole, for the way in which they had responded.

Councillor Kilgour thanked the Service for their participation in the fabulous Pride Event which had taken place in Newcastle over the weekend.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Burdis, Hunter, Johnson, G. Smith, Warne, Wood and also PCC K. McGuinness.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

12. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority held on 26 June 2023, Part I be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- (ii) The Minutes of the Meeting of the Governance Committee held on 30 June 2023, Part I be noted for information.

Member Links with Community Fire Stations & Departments

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report which set out for the consideration of Members, a revised list of links between Members and the Community Fire Stations and departments within Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. It also proposed to assign Members a key point of contact within the Executive Leadership Team of the Service to build relationships and aid communication.

A revised table of Members Links had been compiled (Appendix A of the report) which set out for consideration, the proposed links between each fire station and service departments and Fire Authority Members.

A request was made for the allocation of South Shields Community Fire Station, Councillor Joan Keegan to be swapped with Councillor Joyce Welsh, Hebburn Community Fire Station.

In addition, a request was made to swap Councillors Smith and Usher on the Marley Park Community Fire Station and the Sunderland Central Community Fire Station.

Councillor Kilgour also asked if a swop could be made in relation to herself and Councillor D. Wood.

13. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The report and the proposed link arrangements set out in Appendix A, be approved subject to the above amendments and;
- (ii) The links between Members and stations/departments be noted and endorsed.

Revised Dates of Future Meetings

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report requesting that Members approve the amendments which had been made to the schedule of meeting dates, due to clarification sought from the Service, and to ensure sufficient timelines were provided between meetings for progression of business.

Members were advised that the following amendments had been made to the schedule of dates:-

The HR Committee in July 2023 had been cancelled, with any business being presented at the meeting in October 2023.

The October Fire Authority meeting had been rescheduled from 9 October 2023 to 16 October 2023.

The Policy and Performance Committee scheduled for 4 September 2023 had been removed from the schedule, as the Service confirmed this was no longer required.

14. RESOLVED that the dates for all future Fire Authority and Committee Meetings be approved.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2021-2024 Proposal 3; Birtley Fire Station Recommended Amendment

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2022/23

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Finance Director and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide members with an overview of the compliments and complaints received by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

DCFO Heath advised Members that during 2022/23, 158 compliments and 18 complaints were received; the volumes of both were minor in comparison to the 77,925 'official' interactions recorded with the public for this period.

Members were advised that whilst the Service aimed for operational excellence, there may be occasions when it did not deliver to the standards expected and welcomed views about performance, allowing the opportunity to investigate and correct circumstances of underperformance and learn from the outcomes in order to improve the quality of service provided.

During 2022/23 the number of compliments increased by 183%, rising from 86 in 2021/22 to 158.

In relation to complaints, of the 18 complaints received for 2022/23, 11% were upheld following investigation. The highest number of complaints received (6) were related to on duty staff conduct, however none of those complaints were upheld following a thorough investigation.

In response to a query relating to the compliment from a resident in Australia, DCFO Heath agreed to look into this, however suggested that it was likely to be someone visiting the UK on holiday.

15. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority) and the Finance Director submitted a joint report to consider the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and also the revised Code of Corporate Governance 2023.

DCFO Heath explained that the revised Code of Corporate Governance had not been published. A discussion ensued and it was confirmed that this had been reviewed by the Governance Committee and it was therefore agreed that its approval would be delegated to the Chairman of the Authority.

Members were advised that the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework showed that the arrangements continued to be fit for purpose and assurance could be given that the framework was operating effectively in practice but this was subject to the implementation of the outstanding and new improvement actions.

DCFO Heath referred to the actions from the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 and explained that only two actions now remained outstanding and had been carried forward for completion during 2023/24.

There were no new improvement actions identified during the annual governance review 2022/23, for action during 2023/24.

In conclusion, based on the evidence examined, the governance framework in place had continued to be effective for the year ending 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

The review had not identified any weaknesses that would need to be highlighted in the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 and subject to the completion of the outstanding improvement actions during 2023/24, the Authority's governance and internal control systems were considered appropriate and effective.

The Authority would continue to be proactive in its approach to monitoring the effectiveness of its governance arrangements by carrying out a comprehensive review each year.

16. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 be approved; and
- (ii) Approval of the revised Code of Corporate Governance 2023 be delegated to the Chairman of the Authority.

(Signed) P. TYE
Chairperson

