

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 13 JUNE 2011 at 10.30
am.

Present:

Councillor B Heron in the Chair

Councillors Ahad, Bell, M Forbes, N Forbes, Haley, Mole, Mortimer, Mulvenna, Ord, Padgett, Renton, Stephenson, Trueman and Watters.

Part I

Appointment of Chairman

1. RESOLVED that Councillor Heron be appointed as Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing period to the next Annual Meeting.

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Wright, the previous Chairman of the Authority, for the work he had done during his term of office and thanked the Members who had resigned from the Authority for their contributions over the years.

Councillor Renton and M Forbes also expressed their thanks to the Members who had stepped down.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Gambling.

Appointment of Vice-Chairman

2. RESOLVED that Councillor N Forbes be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Authority for the ensuing period to the next Annual Meeting.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

3. RESOLVED that:-
 - (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority, Part I held on 28 March 2011, be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
 - (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Civil Contingencies Committee, Part I, held on 4 April 2011, be noted for information.

It was highlighted that the Civil Contingencies Committee was chaired by Councillor Charlton not Councillor Clark as shown on the minutes.

Membership of Authority, Appointment to Committees and Appointment of Spokesmen for 2011/2012

The Deputy Clerk to the Authority submitted a report to notify the appointments to the Fire and Rescue Authority made by the Constituent Authorities and to consider the appointments to the Committees and the spokesmen for 2011/2012.

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

4. RESOLVED that: -
 - (i) the undermentioned Members be appointed to serve on the Committees of the Authority indicated for the Municipal Year 2011/2012: -
 - (a) Governance Committee

Independent Chairman	-	Mr G N Cook
Independent Member	-	Mr I Paterson
Independent Member	-	Ms G Goodwill
Councillors Bell, Watters, Trueman, Mole, Padgett and Ord		

(b) Policy and Performance Committee

Councillors N Forbes, Heron, Ahad, Mulvenna, Padgett and M Forbes.

Chairman - N Forbes

Vice-Chairman - Heron

(c) Civil Contingencies Committee

Councillors Bell, Gambling, Trueman, Watters, Mole, Haley, Renton and Mortimer.

Chairman - Bell

Vice-Chairman - Gambling

(d) Human Resources Committee

Councillors Bell, Haley, Stephenson, Trueman, Watters, Mole, Renton and M Forbes

Chairman - Bell

Vice-Chairman - Haley

(e) Appointments Committee

Councillors Heron, N Forbes, Bell, Haley, Stephenson, Ord and M Forbes

Chairman - Heron

Vice-Chairman - N Forbes

(f) Disciplinary Appeals Committee

Councillors Heron, N Forbes, Bell, Watters and Mortimer

(g) Personnel Appeals Sub-Committee

Councillors Heron, Ahad, Padgett, N Forbes, Ord and Mortimer

Chairman - Heron

(h) Emergency Sub-Committee

Councillors Heron, N Forbes and Ord

- (ii) the undermentioned Members be appointed as spokesmen for the purpose of answering questions from Members of the Constituent Councils on the discharge of the Authority's functions: -

Gateshead	-	Councillor Mole
Newcastle	-	Councillor N Forbes
North Tyneside	-	Councillor Gambling
South Tyneside	-	Councillor Bell
Sunderland	-	Councillor Heron

- (iii) the undermentioned Members be appointed as Lead Members and Support Members: -

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Lead Member	-	Councillor Bell
Support Member	-	Councillor Haley

Diversity and Equality

Lead Member	-	Councillor N Forbes
Support Member	-	Councillor Ahad

Performance Management

Lead Member	-	Councillor Heron
Support Member	-	Councillor N Forbes

- (iv) Councillors Heron and N Forbes, with Councillor Haley as a substitute, be appointed as the Authority's representatives on the Local Government Association.
- (v) Councillor Heron be appointed to the Local Government Association Urban Commission.
- (vi) Councillors Heron and Forbes, with Councillors Trueman and Padgett as substitutes, be appointed to the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities (AMFRA).
- (vii) Councillors Bell and Haley be appointed to the North East Fire Control Company.

Date, Time and Venue of Future Meetings

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority, Finance Officer and Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report setting out the proposed dates, times and venue of meetings of the Authority and its Committees, together with the Awareness and Development Programme for the Municipal Year 2011/2012.

The Chairman encouraged all Members of the Authority to take up the training opportunities and the Chief Fire Officer advised that a short induction for new Members would take place on 18 July 2011.

5. RESOLVED that the cycle of meetings 2011/2012 as set out in the report be approved.

Revenue Budget Outturn 2010/2011 and Revenue Budget First Review 2011/2012

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report advising Members of the Revenue Budget Outturn position for 2010/2011, outlining the main areas of variance and any related proposed actions.

The Finance Officer highlighted that the final outturn position may be subject to change, as the Statement of Accounts for 2010/2011 was still being prepared, however any changes would be unlikely to have a material impact on the Authority's position. It was proposed that the Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Authority, be given delegated authority to take any additional final account decisions beyond those included in the report.

The Finance Officer reported that the Authority had shown a positive financial performance during 2010/2011 and would go into 2011/2012 in a strong position, although it would face significant challenges moving forward. General balances stood at £3.336 million, which was a healthy position for the Authority.

The Finance Officer drew Members' attention to the main variances from the third review, listed at paragraph 2.5, and commented that savings continued to be made in employee costs.

The Finance Officer confirmed that although at an early stage, progress for the current 2011/2012 financial year was positive and in line with budget.

With regard to the Major Reserves and Provisions, the Finance Officer advised that an Organisational Change Reserve had been established in 2010/2011 to cover expected costs following an organisational review of the Authority. This reflected the sensible approach which was being taken to financial planning.

Councillor Haley made reference to the transfer of the Regional Control Centre (RCC) Reserve to facilitate the future delivery of the Mobilising function and asked if this transfer would be sufficient. The Chief Fire Officer stated that this was being monitored and that the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) would potentially have funding available for this.

Upon discussion, it was: -

6. RESOLVED that: -
 - (i) the Revenue Budget Outturn for 2010/2011, as detailed at paragraph 2.4, be noted;

- (ii) the sums earmarked within the Budget Carry Forward Reserve and the proposed transfers to other earmarked reserves listed at paragraphs 2.8 to 2.10 and at Appendix B be noted:
- (iii) the position with regard to the Revenue Budget for 2011/2012, detailed at section 3, be noted:
- (iv) the Balances position detailed at paragraph 4.2 and at Appendix C be noted: and
- (v) the Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Authority, be delegated to take any additional final accounts decisions in order to maximise the financial position of the Authority.

Capital Programme Outturn 2010/2011 and Capital Programme First Review 2011/2012

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report presenting the provisional capital outturn for 2010/2011, highlighting the main variances from the 2010/2011 Capital Programme Third Review and reviewing the current year's programme to reflect changes since the original programme was approved.

Members were advised that net slippage from 2010/2011 to 2011/2012 of £794,053 was largely due to: -

- £30,000 approved by Members after the Third Review relating to works arising from the Stock Condition Survey
- £365,500 reprofiling of the Vehicle Replacement Programme
- £398,553 net slippage on Capital projects as detailed below:

IT Equipment - £165,900

- New and Replacement Hardware (£60,000)
- Network and Communications Infrastructure Development (£30,000)
- Software and Supporting Systems (£34,360)
- Smart Cards (£34,040)
- Other IT equipment (£7,500)

Operational Equipment - £100,746

- Fireground Radios (£68,427)
- Other Operational Equipment (£32,319)

Estates - £131,907

- NEFRA Groundworks at Tynemouth (£48,500)
- Works arising from the Stock Condition Survey (£24,686)
- Carbon Management Plan (£39,375)
- Other (£19,346)

The funding for all schemes that had slipped would be carried forward into 2011/2012 through the Budget Carry Forward Reserve to meet costs as they arose.

The Finance Officer highlighted that the Capital Programme had been increased from £3,370,967 to £4,135,020 and the prudential indicators were being reviewed in the light of the provisional capital outturn. Any amendments would be reported at the 2011/2012 Capital Programme Second Review. The programme overall was on track at this early stage of the financial year.

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

7. RESOLVED that the revised Capital Programme for 2011/2012 as set out in Appendix A be approved in light of the provisional capital outturn for 2010/2011.

Annual Governance Review 2010/2011

The Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority, Finance Officer and Personnel Advisor submitted a joint report detailing the findings of the 2010/2011 Annual Governance Review and sought approval of the Annual Governance Statement, prior to its incorporation in the Statement of Accounts.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Annual Governance Review was carried out in line with CIPFA/SOLACE guidelines and minor changes would be made to the Code of Corporate Governance as a result of issues identified within the review.

Members' attention was drawn to the methodology used for the review and section 5 of the report which detailed the process which the Corporate Governance Steering Group had followed in carrying out the review.

The Steering Group concluded that the Authority had robust and effective governance and internal control arrangements in place and the views elicited from Members and all senior managers across the Authority demonstrated that the principles of good governance were embedded. The review had not identified any weaknesses that would need to be highlighted in the Annual Governance Statement, however a small number of actions had been identified to further develop governance and control arrangements.

The Deputy Chief Fire officer referred to the Action Plan for 2010/2011 and stated that the outstanding actions from that plan would be carried forward to the Action Plan for 2011/2012.

Councillor N Forbes highlighted that some of the high priority risk areas which had been identified were dependent on responses from partners and there was a possibility that decisions made by partner organisations could have an unintended impact on the Authority's work. He asked how the Authority worked with partners to consider resources across the area.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Joy Brindle advised the Authority worked very closely with Local Strategic Partnerships in the area at both a strategic and delivery level and had a good track record in developing relationships with these bodies. For example, the Authority worked very hard on community safety issues such as deliberate fires as these would also cause problems for Councils and the Police. Close working was also required to ensure that work was not being duplicated and opportunities for funding were maximised.

Upon discussion, it was: -

8. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the revised Code of Corporate Governance be noted and endorsed;
- (ii) the Annual Governance Statement be noted and endorsed: and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Annual Audit Fee 2010/2011

The Finance Officer submitted a report informing members that the Audit Commission had notified the Authority of the work they intend to cover and the applicable fee for that work for the new financial year 2011/2012.

Members were informed that the Authority's Scale Fee for 2011/2012 had been reduced to £68,080 as a result of no inflationary increase and a cut in scale fees of 3%. This represented a continued reduction in the overall audit fee of 8% (£5,920) from the 2010/2011 level.

Accordingly, it was: -

9. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) the reduced audit fees for the work to be undertaken in 2011/2012, based on the Audit Commission's risk-based approach to audit planning, be noted.

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.

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

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

11. 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.

