

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, 20TH APRIL, 2009 at
10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor T. Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Boyes, Charlton, Clark, N. Forbes, Haley, Heron, Jordan, McIntyre, McMillan, Scaplehorn and Woodwark.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bollands, M. Forbes and Renton.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McMillan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Item 9 - Pay Protection as a relative may be involved in proposals and withdrew from the meeting during this discussion.

Minutes

124. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 16th March, 2009 – Part I (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record;

- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 30th March, 2009, Part I (circulated) be received and noted; and
- (iii) the minutes of the meeting of the North East Fire and Rescue Regional Management Board held on 20th January, 2009, Part I (circulated) be noted for information.

Approval of Reason for Failure to Attend Meetings

The Clerk to the Authority submitted a report (circulated) to seek the Authority's approval for an extended period of absence from meetings of the Authority by Councillor Bollands.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members were reminded of Councillor Bollands' illness and asked to approve his absence from meetings for a period beyond six months, without any effect on his status as a member of the Authority.

It was:-

125. RESOLVED that, for the purposes of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1985 and Standing Order D2:-

- (i) approval be given to the absence of Councillor Bollands' from meetings of the Authority and its Committees and Sub-Committees over the preceding six months by reason of his serious ill-health; and
- (ii) Councillor Bollands' ill-health shall continue to be an approved reason for any absence from meetings over the coming six month period.

Regional Fire Control – Update

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) providing Members with an update on progress in respect of the FiReControl project and the establishment of the Regional Control Centre in the North East as well as outlining the outcome of the delegation to the Fire Minister of representatives of the Regional Management Board (RMB).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that a detailed response to the first review of the Performance Standards had now been submitted to CLG. Overall, whilst acknowledging the extent of the work undertaken so far to establish a set of network performance standards, a great deal of work still needed to be undertaken to make the standards acceptable to the user community.

Good progress was being made in the Authority to advance the human resource element of the project.

As part of the consultation and communication strategy, a series of staff workshops were scheduled to commence in April 2009, with a view to continue information sharing with staff affected by the transfer.

On 3rd March, 2009 CLG published a circular which provided further information about the second payment for the financial year 2008/09. The Circular clearly set out the additional funding that authorities would receive in 2008/09 based upon new burdens principles. The North East was to receive an additional £365,135. This was in addition to the £21.8m already provided nationally to authorities in July 2008.

The timescales proposed remain particularly challenging and every effort was being made to ensure that the Authority was in a position to cut-over in the summer of 2010. Members were advised that this timetable still remained ambitious, especially as cut-over is a tripartite exercise involving the North East, the South West and the East Midlands regions.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Officers of the Fire and Rescue Service for all their hard work and commitment on this project, to date.

Upon discussion, it was:-

126. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority continue to make representations as appropriate regarding the financial issues raised within this report; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Integrated Risk Management Plan: Dual Staffing Review

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a report which set out, for the consideration of Members, a proposal to introduce dual staffing arrangements for the Emergency Tender (ET) based at Colby Court Community Fire Station and the Rescue Tender (RT) based at Hebburn Community Fire Station.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Members referred to the report which set out the findings in respect of the appropriateness of the current primary crewing arrangements on the ET and the RT and whether dual crewing of these appliances would be more appropriate following the opportunity to carry out a critical review of the PDA's in order to assess whether there was a genuine requirement to have the Special Appliances on the majority of the existing PDA's, as was the case at the time.

The outcome of this work was that the Special Appliances were removed from a large number of PDA's and placed on a request-only basis. As a result of this change in policy there has been a reduction in the number of incidents which are now attended by these vehicles.

The Chief Fire Officer therefore proposed to dual staff the ET from April 2009, thereby reducing the overall service establishment by 12 posts. This change in crewing arrangements would then be monitored over the following months in respect to its impact on service delivery and it is further proposed to move to dual staffing on the RT in March 2010 resulting in another reduction in the overall establishment of 12 posts from that date.

Upon discussion, it was:-

127. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposal to dual staff the ET from April 2009, be approved and, subject to the outcome of the monitoring exercise;
- (ii) approve the proposal to dual staff the RT from March 2010, be approved.

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).

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

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

129. 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.