

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 15 JULY 2019 at  
10.30am.

**Present:**

Councillor Taylor in the Chair

Councillors Burdis, Butler, Dodds, Forbes, Flynn, Haley, Oliver, Pickard, Samuels, Stephenson and Woodwark.

**Part I**

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Duggan, Hunter, Kilgour and Purvis.

**Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Minutes**

16. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Authority, Part I held on 10 June 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Update on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection Process**

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) submitted a report to inform Members of the outcome of the recent inspection of TWFRS by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

Members were advised that following a comprehensive inspection process, TWFRS had been confirmed as a GOOD service, across the three main inspection pillars of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People.

In 2018/19, HMICFRS would inspect all 45 FRS in England over three tranches. Tranche 1 and 2 had been completed, with tranche 3 currently underway. TWFRS was inspected in tranche 2.

HMICFRS carried out a range of activities to build a picture of TWFRS over several months and the inspection was completed with 'Fieldwork Week' in February 2019, where a team of 11 inspecting officers examined all Service areas.

Inspection reports were published for the 16 FRS in tranche 2 by HMICFRS on 20 June 2019, along with a press release, and were available to the public on the HMICFRS website.

Members were advised that the inspection had been a very valuable process, and had highlighted areas where improvements could be made to provide a consistently good service, for example evaluation of prevention work; ensuring staff training and competency was appropriately recorded and monitored; and ensuring that plans were financially sustainable and approved by the Fire Authority.

HMICFRS stated "Overall, we commend Tyne and Wear FRS for its performance. The reports provided a good foundation for improvement for the year ahead.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Authority, thanked the CFO and all staff and volunteers for the hard work, dedication and commitment to TWFRS and commented that this was an excellent report.

The Vice-Chairman referred to the areas which required improvement and commented that road safety was also an issue for the police, therefore further partnership working needed to be explored, which could be followed up with the new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Councillor Forbes went on to say, that the Authority had areas of national achievement and that overall, a huge amount of fantastic work had been carried out. Unfortunately, Tyne and Wear had been faced with the most significant cuts over the last 10 years which had a resultant impact on service delivery however plans were now already in place, following recommendations arising from the inspection.

Councillor Oliver agreed that this was an excellent report and also that road safety was not something that the fire service should be responsible for.

The Chief Fire Officer referred Members to the Firefighter cost per person per year which was higher in Tyne and Wear (£27.60) when compared to England (£22.38) and commented that TWFRS was a metropolitan, high risk service therefore whole time services needed to be applied.

Councillor Stephenson commented that Tyne and Wear had maintained standards year and year despite the continuously unfair cuts applied by Government and urged that this be taken into consideration in future years when Government produce the finance settlement.

The Chief Fire Officer agreed and assured the Authority that he would be lobbying that afternoon in London, as deprivation in Tyne and Wear was still not fully recognised in the grant funding provided by government.

Members of the Authority commented that staff within the service were excellent and that the results of the inspection were a testament to the staff. All staff and volunteers were therefore to be thanked.

17. RESOLVED that:-

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

### **Member Links with Community Fire Stations**

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report setting 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.

Members were advised that they would they would be allocated a key point of contact within the Executive Leadership Team which would give Members access to any information that they needed. Whilst this would also facilitate the development of Area Managers in the local political arena, it would also give Members a more efficient route to gain access to areas of the Service that they may need at short notice.

A revised list of Member links was set out at Appendix A of the report, and if approved, officers responsible for each specific location would establish contact and arrange a programme of visits to the link stations/departments.

Members were advised that they may also wish to contact their ward colleagues and invite them to attend meetings as appropriate.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of these visits, and also offered to attend these meetings, if required.

Councillor Burdis commented that the Tynemouth Community Fire Station Open Day which had taken place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July had been an excellent event and complimented all staff involved.

18. RESOLVED that, having given consideration to the report and the proposed link arrangements set out in Appendix A, the links between Members and stations/departments be noted and endorsed.

## Update on Collaboration

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide Members with an update on progress of collaborative activities from July 2018 to June 2019, between Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) and its partner organisations, which included but were not exclusive to:

- Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS);
- County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS);
- The North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS);
- Northumbria Police (NP);
- The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria (OPCC).

ACFO Baines referred Members to some examples of collaborative activities that had taken place during the last 12 months including:

- TWFRS had participated in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Workforce Group to review maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental policies from across a number of public sector organisations. This national project coincided with an internal review of TWFRS' family friendly policy and in consultation with representative bodies the policy had since been updated;
- TWFRS and NFRS worked closely with NP to establish the cause of any suspicious fire or fire fatality. This had culminated in these services signing a Section 22A collaboration agreement, to achieve a United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) ISO:17020 accreditation for fire investigation (FI) as requested by the Forensic Regulator, under one of the first such collaborations in England;
- TWFRS hosted a Sprinkler seminar in May 2019, in association with British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association (BAFSA) to coincide with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Sprinkler Awareness Week;
- Cardioproof Community Interest Company (CIC) approached the Collaboration Delivery Group to identify whether they would be interested in purchasing defibrillators for their sites, with Cardioproof providing external cabinets for public access. TWFRS, NFRS and NP agreed to purchase defibrillators and to date, TWFRS had installed four cPADS;
- TWFRS collaborated with CDDFRS and NFRS on a joint firefighter recruitment campaign in July 2018 and TWFRS recruited 23 wholetime firefighters in the first recruitment drive since 2010;
- TWFRS, OPCC, NP and NEAS had collaborated across a range of events as part of the eleventh annual Northern Pride celebration in Newcastle 20-22 July 2018 and Sunderland 23 September 2018;
- The Blue Light Choir were invited to sing at the Emergency Services event in Manchester on 9 September, 2018 to commemorate the first emergency services day; and
- Procurement Officers had formed a regional Procurement Collaboration Group to work together to improve the way goods and services were procured across the region.

Members were then advised that some of the activities outlined above had already generated some income between July 2018 and June 2019. The income generated in 2018/2019 was £822,000; an increase of £52,000 on the 2017/2018 income. Cumulatively, since 2011/12, these activities had generated a total of over £4.9m income.

Councillor Woodward congratulated the service on the amount of work achieved and questioned why collaboration with Princes Trust had not been included.

ACFO Baines responded by advising that the report included a snapshot of new work which had been undertaken within the last year.

19. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The progress on collaboration be noted; and
- (ii) The continuation of collaboration between TWFRS and its partners be supported and championed. .

### **Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and Mobilising and Resource Management System Technical Refresh – Update**

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) submitted a report to update Members on the current progress of the national Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP).

Members were advised that on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019 the National Audit Office (NAO) published its report entitled *“Progress Delivering the Emergency Services Network”*. With the following recommendations being made:-

- The Home Office needs to test its overall programme plan, to determine whether the new schedule for launching ESN and shutting down Airwave is achievable
- The Home Office needs to decide how the vital work to integrate all the ESN technology will be carried out
- The Home Office needs to work with other sponsors and users to develop the arrangements for managing ESN once it is fully operational
- The Home Office should develop a contingency plan that sets out what it will do if technology on which the overall ESN programme is dependent does not work

TWFRS continued to support the programme in addressing these recommendations and planning for transition to ESN.

Members were advised that the initial Control Room upgrade works to support ESN connectivity were in the early stages of implementation following progression approval being given by Members.

Further upgrade works would be required once the 'Prime' product was available resulting in expected TWFRS transition commencement in 2021 with full transition to be completed prior to Airwave shutdown in December 2022.

MDT Hardware and software was currently under testing and would progress through the Airwave code of connection process prior to installation and training commencement.

Control Room equipment had been delivered with installation expected to take place in the coming weeks.

Councillor Haley referred to section 5 of the report, and questioned what risks applied to the organisation.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that this was unknown at the present time, and that costs would be closely monitored to ensure that this was not of detriment to the organisation and the residents of Tyne and Wear. Any cost implications would be reported to Members in due course.

Councillor Woodward expressed his concerns that airwave was coming to the end of its use and commented that this, and the impact on the service, was very frustrating.

20. RESOLVED that:-

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

### **Correspondence from the Health and Safety Executive – Close Proximity Crewing and Alternative Crewing Models**

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide information to Members in respect of correspondence received by the Chief Fire Officer from the Health and Safety Executive (the HSE) on 7 June 2019.

Members were reminded that in developing the Day Crewing (close call) duty system, collective agreement relating to the proposed terms and conditions could not be reached and alternatives to such an agreement were considered.

At the time of implementation, it was considered that the voluntary agreement of staff intending to work the DC(CC) system was likely to be sufficient, when coupled with principles of rest and managing fatigue built into the local arrangements for DC(CC), to meet the needs of the Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended) ("the WTR").

The DC(CC) system at both locations had been working well since its implementation.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that on 8 January 2019, the FBU wrote to him, setting out their position following a judicial review involving South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. In this letter, the FBU described DC(CC) as an 'Unlawful Duty Roster' and requested that the Chief Fire Officer undertake a review of the system operated by the Authority.

In response to this request, a review commenced in January 2019 looking at all aspects of the DC(CC) duty system and a further request was made to the FBU to negotiate a relevant collective agreement, which was declined.

Subsequently, the Chief Fire Officer had received correspondence from the HSE in relation to compliance with regulation 6 of the WTR that clearly set out the view of the HSE in terms of such duty systems.

Members were referred to the response to the HSE and advised that it was expected that further reports would be presented to members that would outline the option available to the Authority in resolving the perceived lack of compliance.

Councillor Haley asked for confirmation that staff were working in a safe environment and was assured by the Chief Fire Officer that all staff were comfortable with the current shift arrangements although a collective agreement had not been reached with the FBU. Any changes to this way of working however, would have a resultant impact on the IRMP, and require a significant amount of funding to implement an alternative shift pattern which may in turn, reduce fire cover at these particular stations.

The Vice Chairman expressed his concerns in relation to the representation which had been made by the FBU as the staff (i.e Membership) were willing to enter into the agreement and were happy with this way of working. In addition to this, essential savings were made which did not result in a loss of cover.

The Chairman agreed and explained that he had recently visited Birtley and Rainton Bridge Community Fire stations and that there were waiting lists to work this particular shift pattern. Councillor Taylor therefore urged the FBU to visit the stations and speak to their staff Members to ascertain their views as staff had volunteered for these changes.

21. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted and endorsed;
- (ii) The response to the HSE (attached to the report) be noted and endorsed;  
and
- (iii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

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

22. 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 was considered to involve a likely disclosure of 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, Paragraph 3).

(Signed) T. Taylor  
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.