

Item No. 3 (i)

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 10 SEPTEMBER 2018
at 10.30am.

Present:

Councillor Curran in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Burdis, Dodds, Duggan, Flynn, Haley, Harrison, Oliver, Perry,
Pickard, Stephenson, and Woodwark.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors
Forbes and Kilgour together with Dame Vera Baird DBE QC.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

21. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the minutes of the Authority, Part I held on 16th July 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 30th July 2018 be noted for information.

Meritorious Conduct Award – Fire and Rescue Authority Award and Chief Officers Commendation

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) submitted a report to present a Meritorious Conduct Award for brave and meritorious actions to Firefighter Robert Brown in recognition of his actions in rescuing a casualty from the River Tyne on 25th June 2018.

The Chief Fire Officer, Chris Lowther, presented a Chief Fire Officers Commendation to members of Green Watch from Byker Community Fire Station, led by Watch Manager Iain McKinnes, for their actions at the same incident.

ACFO Robson advised Members that on 25 June 2018, a 999 call was received informing of an adult male on the wrong side of the barrier on the Tyne Bridge. Crews were mobilised to the incident, supported by the Swift Water Rescue Team from Byker Community Fire Station. As the crews arrived the adult male had jumped and begun to float downstream, face down in the water.

Members were advised that the professional actions of Firefighter Brown and the swift actions of the members of Green Watch undoubtedly brought the incident to a successful outcome and that they were a credit to the Authority. To remain calm and focussed during a difficult incident was imperative to rescuing the casualty in this dynamically evolving situation.

The Chairman, on behalf of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority, thanked all involved in the incident and thanked them for their actions which brought the incident to a swift and successful end.

22. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Meritorious Conduct Award and Chief Fire Officers Commendation; be noted and endorsed, and;
- (ii) Firefighter Robert Brown and members of Green Watch at Byker Community Fire Station be congratulated and thanked for their actions.

Statement of Assurance and Annual Report (SOAAR)

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority) and the Strategic Finance Manager submitted a joint report to present the draft Statement of Assurance and Annual Report 2017/18 (Appendix A) to members for approval.

ACFO Baines advised Members that the purpose of the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report was to inform the Authority's stakeholders how Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority performed during 2017/18, how much was spent and what it was spent on. This document also met the requirements placed on the service governance as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2012, to prepare an annual Statement of Assurance.

In relation to how TWFRA performed, Members were advised that the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report contained a summary of performance for 2017/18. Over 17,000 incidents were attended in 2017/18 with an average response time to dwelling fires of 5 minutes 22 seconds (excluding Targeted Response Vehicles and specialist appliances). Based on the latest Home Office figures TWFRS had the fastest response rate of any metropolitan fire services to dwelling fires, and were the second fastest compared to all fire and rescue services in the country.

The Authority continued to face financial pressures which created a huge challenge in continuing to tackle community risk. Notwithstanding these pressures, the committed workforce would continue to work jointly with partners to deliver positive outcomes for the communities of Tyne and Wear.

Councillors referred to the priorities detailed within the Appendix, particularly in relation to Priority 1 and 2 and were advised that priority 1 related to loss of life and whilst there had been a spike within priority 2 (deliberate fires), intervention plans were in place and a vast amount of work was also being undertaken with hospital's and education associations in relation to false alarms.

Members acknowledged that the targets set were extremely challenging and ambitious and reviewed during Policy and Performance Committees.

Councillor Oliver referred to the number of deliberate fires and the diminishing resources to deal with such events and questioned the lobbying position to prevent this from happening.

ACFO Baines advised that a significant amount of collaboration work was undertaken with the PCC, Local Authorities, and Health and Environmental Agencies to change the approach to anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Pickard referred to page 27 of the plan, in particular priority 2 and questioned whether a breakdown could be provided in relation to per authority and premises. ACFO Robson commented that this was an excellent idea and agreed to action this.

Councillor Flynn asked how much dementia played a role in relation to this and commented that health issues should be targeted.

ACFO Baines advised that this work was undertaken by the Community Safety Teams and that a vast amount of work was undertaken to protect residents in their homes.

23. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) the draft Statement of Assurance and Annual Report 2017/2018 be approved.

Strategic Community Safety Plan 2017-2020 Refresh 2018

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report as following the appointment of the new Fire Authority Chair, significant events such as Grenfell and the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena, and the introduction of the new FRS National Framework, it was felt an appropriate time to refresh the SCSP 2017-2020.

Members were advised that the SCSP 2017-2020 had been reviewed to reflect the appointment and views of the new Fire Authority Chair.

The refresh recognised the major national incidents that had occurred in the sector. The plan addressed the influence the service would have in how the fire service nationally, responded to those incidents and the lessons to be learnt from various national reviews and inquiries such as Grenfell and Kerslake. It was important that as a Service TWFRS remained prepared for any incident that may occur within the communities and be ready to support incidents in other areas throughout the UK.

The SCSP 2017-2020, Refresh was attached at Appendix A of the report. ACFO Baines explained that around 70% of people who responded viewed the services as excellent and around 80% valued staff as excellent. This corresponded with feedback received from the public on other consultation activity.

Comments received included “The staff who work for you are some of the best people I’ve met. All are very positive and very helpful”, “They are courteous, professional and go out of their way to help you” and “Really friendly and polite, nothing is too much to ask”.

In 2017, partners were consulted in the development our Community Safety Strategy 2017 - 2020. The Community Safety Strategy set the direction for the frontline services that partners and the public experience. The feedback received from partners was taken into account in developing the Community Safety Strategy.

These partners’ comments were reviewed in the refresh of the SCSP 2017 -2020. No further changes were needed.

24. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Strategic Community Safety Plan 2017-2020 Refresh 2018 be approved; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Firefighter Recruitment

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report informing Members of the position relating to the current Firefighter recruitment

campaign, which aimed to recruit and train 20 new Firefighters from 29 October 2018.

ACFO Baines advised Members that working in collaboration with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, a campaign was currently running, with recruitment opening on 9 July 2018. The recruitment campaign commenced with an inclusive workforce campaign which had run over six weeks which produced targeting information which Community Safety teams used to engage with over 3,000 members of the community.

The registration portal opened on 9 July 2018, with 4,520 candidates completing registration; 4,469 completed this correctly and were subsequently invited to progress to the next stage.

The number of candidates who completed the Behavioural Styles Questionnaire was 3,930 of which 2,940 met the pass mark (30% percentile).

The number of candidates who completed the Situational Judgement Tests was 2,764 of which 1,916 met the pass mark (40% percentile).

The final set of online tests were grouped into three subcategories, numerical, verbal reasoning and mechanical reasoning. The number of candidates who completed these tests was 1,832 of which those top 200 were selected.

Members were advised that the 200 candidates undertook role related tests between 6 and 10 August and 130 candidates were invited to interview between 20 and 31 August.

On 29 October 2018, the new recruits would commence their 14 week initial training at the BTC. Accounting for a two week break over the Christmas period, it was anticipated that they would be deployed to station from 17 February 2019.

Councillor Pickard proposed that the recruits be invited to a meeting of the Authority to share their experiences of the recruitment process. Members of the Authority welcomed this suggestion and Councillor Haley, as Chairman of the Human Resources Committee, offered his support as part of the induction process.

Councillor Haley questioned whether statistics were available in relation to equality and diversity and was advised by ACFO Baines that a report would be brought to a future Human Resources Committee.

ACFO Baines advised that complaints had been received in relation to the recruitment process, particularly in relation to the 'bar' being set too high. ACFO Baines explained that the service did aim very high and only the very best of applicants would be recruited to the service to provide the very best for Tyne and Wear.

25. RESOLVED that:-

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

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (the Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to advise that the Fire and Rescue National Framework provided the overall strategic direction to Fire and Rescue Authorities in England. The previous framework was issued in 2012 and was reported against annually.

ACFO Baines referred Members to section 2 of the report which explained that the revised National Framework embedded the government's fire reform agenda, alongside provisions in the Policing and Crime Act 2017. It set national priorities and objectives for all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England to follow.

An assessment against the requirements of the National Framework as they applied to the Authority was attached at Appendix A. This analysis showed TWFRS were in a strong position in complying with the national standards.

There were two areas of the Framework the Service were currently progressing:

- The introduction of a formal Reserves Policy, which built upon the previous papers providing transparency in the approach to managing reserves.
- The approach to professional standards, which would be progressed alongside national developments in this area.

ELT monitored performance against the Framework, and would report performance to the Fire Authority at the year-end as part of the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report.

26. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the revised Fire and Rescue National Framework for England be noted;
- (ii) the contents of the report and the Annex attached be noted and endorsed;
and
- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

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

27. 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 any individual or which was 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) 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 1, 2, 3 and 4).

(Signed) B. Curran
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.

