

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 21 MARCH 2016 at
10.30AM.

Present:

Councillor T Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, Burdis, M. Forbes, N. Forbes, Haley, Harrison, Lauchlan, Mole, Pickard and Stockdale.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Maughan, Perry, Price, Renton and Stephenson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

77. RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority, Part I, held on 15th February, 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Appointment of Finance Officer

The Deputy Clerk to the Authority submitted a report to request that members consider the appointment of a Finance Officer and responsible officer under section 73 Local Government Act 1985.

Members were advised that Sonia Tognarelli, Finance Officer for the Authority and Interim Head of Paid Service and Director of Finance for Sunderland City Council, was retiring on 31 March 2016. Sunderland City Council, at its meeting on 23 March,

2016 appointed Barry Scarr as Interim Director of Corporate Services and officer designated under section 151 Local Government Act 1972, with effect from 1 April 2016.

78. RESOLVED that Barry Scarr be appointed as the Finance Officer and responsible officer under section 73 Local Government Act 1985, following the retirement of Sonia Tognarelli.

Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2016/2017, including Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019

The Finance Officer submitted a report to advise the Authority of the proposed Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (including both borrowing and investment strategies) for 2016/2017 and to note the Prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 for approval, and also to note the comments from the Governance Committee who provide a scrutiny role on the proposed policy and indicators each year.

Members were advised that the report had been submitted to the Governance Committee on 14th March, 2016 and that there were no major changes proposed to the overall Treasury Management Strategy in 2016/2017, which maintained the prudent approach adopted in previous years.

The Authority's performance for 2015/2016 showed that the current average rate of borrowing at 3.51% was low in comparison with other local authorities whilst the current rate earned on investments at 0.41% was higher than the benchmark figure of 0.36%. Market conditions were also under constant review in order that the Authority could take a view on the optimum time to carry out further borrowing or debt rescheduling, should the need or opportunity arise. This prudent approach had been well received, in the past.

The Finance Officer referred members to Appendix 1 of the report and in particular, to the Authorised Limit for External Debt (2016/17) which totalled £56,083,000 and also the operational boundary for external debt which amounted to £51,083,000. Members were assured that these limits would be closely monitored and a report made to the Authority should either of the limits ever be exceeded at any point.

The Finance Officer then referred Members to Appendix 2 of the report (Treasury Management Policy Statement) and explained the basis of the agreed Borrowing Strategy making reference to the benchmark financing rate of 4.00% for long term borrowing.

79. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The Annual Treasury Management Policy and Strategy (including specifically the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategies) for 2016/2017, be approved; and
- (ii) The prudential 'Treasury Management' Indicators for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 be approved.

Councillor N. Forbes left the meeting.

Emergency Medical Response (EMR) Regional Pilot Scheme

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority submitted a report to provide Members with information regarding the authority's commitment to the National Emergency Medical Response (EMR) pilot scheme. The report provided a progress update on the first 6 weeks of the trial (Monday 11th January to Sunday 21st February 2016).

ACFO Lowther reminded members that after analysis of both NEAS and TWFRS incident data, West Denton Fire Station was selected as an initial pilot station for the duration of the trial, using both of the whole time crews/appliances.

Members were advised that during the first 6 weeks of the trial, TWFRS received 124 calls from NEAS to attend a Red 1 or Red 2 incident. Of the 124 requests, TWFRS attended 84 incidents. 11% were categorised as Red 1 and 89% Red 2.

Analysis of the first 6 weeks showed that requests were more frequent during daytime hours, with a peak between 0900 and 1000 hours. This would continue to be monitored over the course of the trial.

The cost of training staff to the level required by NEAS to participate in this pilot was £13,600. The cost of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks was £1549.76.

Councillor Haley questioned costs associated with this initiative, if it was to be rolled out as TWFRS policy across the region and was advised that costs were likely to be high due to training costs therefore funding would need to be sought.

80. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The contents of the update report be noted;
- (ii) On-going participation in the pilot be supported; and
- (iii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Leadership Development and Change Management

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority, the Deputy Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to update Members on the work being undertaken with regards to the creation of a leadership development programme.

Members were reminded that the current uncertain economic climate had presented a number of challenges. To assist in the engagement of staff, the Chief Fire Officer had developed a change management action plan which was designed to manage the organisation through the existing period of change, transforming the organisation to ensure the best possible service to the community was provided.

All of the information from the project to date, had been analysed and captured in a 'Leadership Bond'. Members were advised of the four key components of the Leadership Bond and that the project was now progressing, with a launch being anticipated for late spring-early summer 2016.

Based upon initial investigations for delivery of this wide reaching and complex programme, a budget of £355,000 was anticipated across a 24-month period, to support the development of 300 staff.

81. RESOLVED that:

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

Pay Policy

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority, the Deputy Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to seek approval for the revised Pay Policy Statement for subsequent publication by 31 March 2016 in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Members were referred to section 2.2 of the report which explained that the statutory pay policy statement needed to cover the Authority's policies relating to:

- The level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer (including salary, bonuses and benefits in kind);
- The remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of "lowest paid employees" and its reasons for adopting that definition);
- The relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers; and
- Other specific aspects of chief officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, the use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments, and transparency (i.e. publication of and access to information relating to their remuneration).

Members were referred to the proposed draft Pay Policy Statement which was appended to the report. Members were advised that one of the requirements of the Localism act 2011 was that the Authority had a policy on pay multiples for senior staff.

The definition of lowest paid employees were those staff who were employed in jobs which were paid at Scale 1 level (£13,891).

The current pay multiples for the Chief Fire Officer and lowest paid employee was 10.22:1. This being well within the Government expectation that the pay multiple relationship should be below 20:1 in local government. In addition this was below the national average of 15:1 in the public sector, and 232:1 in the private sector.

Members were advised that the 'Hutton Review of Fair Pay' identified that the most top to bottom pay multiples in the public sector were in the region of 8:1 to 12:1. In addition, the ratio in the Authority, between the Chief Fire Officer and Firefigthers at 4.94:1 was at the bottom end of the scale contained within the 'Hutton Review of Fair Pay' report.

82. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) The draft Pay Policy Statement for publication by 31st March 2016 be approved; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

As it was Councillor M. Forbes' last meeting (after 30 years service), the Chairman on behalf of the Authority, wished her a long and happy retirement and thanked her for her outstanding work and dedication to the service over many years. Councillor M. Forbes responded accordingly, and wished the service every success in the future.

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

83. 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) or to consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 3 and 4).

(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.

