

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 FEBRUARY 2016 at
10.30AM.

Present:

Councillor T Wright in the Chair

Councillors Bell, M. Forbes, Haley, Harrison, Mole, Maughan, Perry, Pickard, Price, Renton and Stephenson.

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Burdis, N. Forbes, Lauchlan and Stockdale.

The Chairman congratulated Councillor N. Forbes on recently being appointed as the new Leader of Labour's Local Government Association (LGA) Group.

Members were reminded that a training session would take place at the conclusion of the meeting on the FRS Equality Framework.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bell declared an interest in relation Item 12 – Estates Development Plan – as a Member of South Tyneside Council.

Minutes

66. RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority, Part I, held on 18th January, 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Review of Members' Allowances Scheme by the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Deputy Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report presenting the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme for the Authority for the financial year 2016/17.

Members were referred to the information from the Panel which was appended to the report and noted that the Panel did not recommend any changes to the responsibilities for which allowances were paid, or the level of allowances.

67. RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Panel be noted and endorsed and that the scheme for 2016-2017 would continue in the same terms as the current scheme and that such scheme would apply until further review and consideration by the Authority.

Capital Programme 2016/2017 including Prudential Indicators for 2016/2017 to 2018/2019

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report to present to Members the proposed Capital Programme for 2016/2017, including the Prudential Indicators for the years 2016/2017 to 2018/2019.

Members were advised that the proposed Capital Programme and Vehicle Replacement Programme totalled an estimated £2,317,095. The programme prioritised projects that added value and would help to lower revenue running costs in the future. The Authority would also need to utilise £4.074m from its capital reserves.

The Finance Officer then referred Members to Appendix B of the report which detailed Prudential Indicators 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 and asked that Members specifically and separately approve the statutory Prudential Indicators, the Authorised Limit for External Debt of £56.083m and the Operational Boundary for External Debt of £51.083m for 2016/2017, in accordance with the regulations.

Members were advised that there were four options for calculating the Minimum Reserve Position (MRP) and that the Regulatory Method (applying the statutory formula set out in the 2003 Regulations before it was revoked in 2008) was proposed. A review would take place during 2016/17 to ensure that current options were still relevant, with the possibility of a revised option for 2017/18.

In response to a question from Councillor Pickard, the Finance Officer explained that it was more timely to undertake a review within the following financial year as whilst some debt could be rescheduled a lot of work needed to be undertaken in-house to determine loan repayments and the various options which would be available to the Authority.

Councillor Haley referred to the reserves position and expressed his concerns that the Authority's reserves were almost exhausted over a two year period. The Finance

Officer agreed and commented that the Authority would need to assess the level of reserves at future meetings and explained the difficult decisions the Authority would be faced with.

68. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the Capital Programme and Vehicle Replacement Programme for 2016/2017 as set out in Appendix A be approved;
- (ii) the Prudential Indicators for the years 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 as set out in Appendix B, and specifically the Authorised Limit for External Debt of £56.083m and the Operational Boundary for External Debt of £51.083m for 2016/2017 be approved; and
- (iii) the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement as set out in Section 2.12 of Appendix 1, be approved.

Revenue Budget 2016/2017 and MTFS 2016/2017 to 2019/2020

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report to present for consideration and approval by members:

- the Revenue Estimates for 2016/2017;
- the Authority's Council Tax Requirement for 2016/2017;
- the Precept required to be levied on the District Councils in Tyne and Wear for 2016/2017, and
- an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy Statement for 2016/2017 to 2019/2020.

Members were reminded that the provisional Finance Settlement was issued on 17th December 2015 and that the Government's Core Spending Power for the Authority would reduce by £0.925m or 1.9% in 2016/2017 to £48.394m. This remained unchanged from the final Settlement which was announced on 8th February 2016.

As reported in January, the Authority continued to face a disproportionately greater reduction in funding compared to most other Authorities. The bulk of this reduction was in respect of the Authority's modified Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). The final SFA for 2016/2017 was £27.4m including Revenue Support Grant of £13.2m. This still represented an overall net reduction in RSG of £1.647m in cash terms (-5.67%) in 2016/2017. An additional transitional grant funding and the Rural Services Grant of £150m and £60.5m respectively, saw the shire and rural areas benefiting once again.

The Finance Officer explained that Government's settlement for 2016/17 and its projections to 2019/20 contained an assumption of year on year increases to Council Tax levels which effectively saw an end to Council Tax Freeze Grant.

The 2016/2017 updated budget position had improved to that indicated in the report presented to the Authority in January, mainly due to reviewing cost pressures, implementing planned IRMP actions, and making further budget efficiency savings.

Taking all this into consideration, the Authority was proposing a revenue budget for 2016/2017 of £48.832m and a Council Tax requirement of £20.960m.

With regards to setting the precept, the Finance Officer explained that the Council Tax Base for 2016/2017 was £275,392, which alone would increase council tax precept income by almost £0.285m. There was also a net surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund for 2015/2016 of £240,519 which improved the financing of the 2016/2017 budget.

The Authority's local share of business rates income totalled £4,285,471. In addition, the Authority would receive £171,804 from its share of the Section 31 grant for Business Rates Relief. However, there was an added cost pressure of £277,307 in relation to the Authority's share of the net deficit position on the business rates element of the Collection Fund for 2015/2016. In effect, the actual Business Rates income was £0.016m more than the Government assessed figure.

Members were advised that an additional factor to take into account is the amount of SFA adjustment Section 31 grant that the Authority would receive in 2016/2017. An assumption of £0.207m had been made based on last year's allocation.

Taking all of the above in account, members were advised that it was possible to construct a balanced budget assuming a 1.99% increase in the Precept (within the capping criteria of below 2%). The proposed increase in Council Tax would result in a 'basic' Band D Council Tax for 2016/2017 of £76.11, an increase of £1.49 from the previous year's precept of £74.62.

Members acknowledged that as reserves were currently earmarked and committed, even with a 1.99% increase in Council Tax, a short term and long term review of the Integrated Risk Management Plan would need to be undertaken to realise further efficiencies for the forthcoming years. If the precept was not increased, a further funding gap would be seen within the 2016/17 financial year and forthcoming years, which would make it continuously difficult to deliver the services currently provided.

The Authority welcomed future opportunities to comment on the proposed 4 year settlement and acknowledged that the Business Rates Re-evaluation, whilst not included with the Settlement, could have a serious impact on the Authority.

69. RESOLVED that:

- (a) the revised estimate for 2015/2016, as summarised at Appendix A be noted;
- (b) the proposed Revenue Estimates for 2016/2017, as summarised at Appendix A be noted;
- (c) the Projected Pensions Account 2016/2017 detailed at Appendix B be noted;
- (d) the associated risks and their mitigation as set out in Appendix C be noted;

- (e) the updated position on the General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves (Appendix D) be approved;
- (f) the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy Statement for 2016/2017 to 2019/2020 detailed at Appendix E be noted;
- (g) the Council Tax base of 275,392 for the year 2016/2017, as notified by the billing authorities within Tyne and Wear under the new regulations be noted;
- (h) the following amounts for the Authority for the year 2016/2017 which represents a Council Tax increase of 1.9999% for 2016/2017, in accordance with Sections 42A to 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended be approved:
 - (i) £60,813,927 - being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(2)(a) to (d) of the Act;
 - (ii) £39,853,842 - being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A(3)(a) to (b) adjusted for item of the Act;
 - (iii) £20,960,085 - being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year, Item R in the formula in Section 42B of the Act;
 - (iv) £76.1100 - being the amount at (iii) (Item R) above divided by the Council Tax Base (Item T), calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 42B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
 - (v) **Valuation Bands**

	£	
A	50.7400	being the amount given by multiplying the
B	59.1967	amount at (iv) above by the number which, in
C	67.6533	the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act,
D	76.1100	is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular
E	93.0233	valuation and divided by the number which that
F	109.9367	proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in
G	126.8500	valuation band D, calculated by the Authority in

H 152.2200 accordance with Section 47(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (i) It be noted that under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act, the Authority's relevant basic amount of council tax for 2016/2017 was not excessive in accordance with the principles determined under Section 52ZC(1) of the Act (i.e. no referendum is required).
- (j) that in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the billing authorities within the area of this authority be issued with precepts in the amount of £20,960,085 for the financial year beginning 1st April 2016, the amount of the respective precepts to be issued to each billing authority's area in accordance with Sections 42A to 48 of the 1992 Act.

Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services: Summary of Consultation Responses and Next Steps

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority submitted a report to brief Members on the Government's response to the consultation on closer working between the emergency services, which was carried out in September and October 2015.

ACFO Brindle advised members that on 26th January, 2016, Government published a summary of responses and set out the next steps in implementing proposals. The response document was attached at Appendix A of the report.

Members were advised that, following the consultation process, Government intended to legislate to introduce all the measures proposed in the document, relating to:

- a) Place a statutory duty on all three emergency services to collaborate with one another to improve efficiency or effectiveness for all parties. This will not prevent other parties, such as local authorities and the voluntary sector, from being part of a collaborative activity, albeit that the duty itself will not extend beyond the emergency services. The Government will ensure that the duty is broad to allow local discretion over how it is best implemented for the benefit of local communities.
- b) Enable Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on the responsibilities of the fire and rescue service(s) in their area where it is in the interests of economy, efficiency or effectiveness or public safety, and where a local case is made.

Councillor Haley questioned who these interested parties were, and was advised that no detail or clarity had been received in relation to this. Councillor Bell expressed her concerns as she had attempted to send a response as a member of the public and that this had been unsuccessfully received and was also a difficult process to undertake.

- c) Provide a process for determining whether a PCC should assume governance for fire and rescue services as broadly set out in the consultation paper. This should include:
 - A requirement that FRAs provide PCCs with all necessary information to help prepare the business case
 - Where all parties are not agreed that fire and rescue should transfer to a PCC, it would be for the Secretary of State to consider the local business case and decide whether the governance change would be in the interests of economy, efficiency. Effectiveness or public safety. To inform this view, they would take into account the outcome of the local consultation and they would seek an independent assessment of the local business case before any decision to proceed.
 - Implementation for each area would be by secondary legislation which would be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny
- d) Enable a PCC to put in place a single employer for local fire and policing, (rather than two separate employers under the governance model) under his or her governance
- e) Provide that the case for putting in place a single employer is assessed using the same process as for a transfer of governance
- f) Enable any changes to the designation of powers to police personnel and volunteers to be applied locally to fire personnel, under the single employer model (NB this is felt to be still within the proposal outlined in the consultation that the distinction between frontline services and the powers of a police officer and firefighter will be maintained).
- g) Enable the post of chief officer to be open to applications from senior fire officers with relevant experience and who meet the standards set by the College of Policing, and remove the requirement in legislation for senior fire officers applying for chief constable posts to have previously been a constable

- h) Extend the remit of Police and Crime Panels so that a PCC's fire responsibilities are scrutinised by the Panel alongside a PCC's police responsibilities, where the PCC's role is extended
- i) Ensure that where a single employer model is put in place, complaints, conduct and death and serious injury matters for fire and rescue personnel and police personnel will be handled in the same way. For other governance models, the system for complaints and conduct matters for fire and rescue personnel will remain separate and unchanged
- j) Enable a PCC to have representation on their local FRA or its committees, with voting rights, in areas where FRS remain the responsibility of FRAs. This will be subject to PCCs making clear their reasons for seeking membership and FRAs agreeing to their request (furthermore FRAs will have the ability to change their membership in order to maintain political balance where a PCC is appointed).
- k) Abolish the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and incorporate fire responsibilities within the existing Greater London Authority structures. This would include creating a deputy mayor for fire, creating a statutory London Fire Commissioner and a new Committee of the London Assembly which will provide scrutiny and oversight.

Members expressed their concerns, and asked whether a countrywide response was obtainable for review, particularly in relation to effectiveness of the suggested proposals. Members were advised that this information was not available at the present time, and therefore discussed the resultant concerns.

70. RESOLVED that the Authority notes the contents of the report would receive further updates as required.

IRMP Response Report

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority submitted a report to provide members with an update on the impact of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Fire Cover actions on operational responses in Tyne and Wear.

In doing so, Members were advised of the following:

First appliance attendance

The average attendance time for the first appliance in year one of the IRMP implementation was 5 minutes 22 seconds, an increase of 5 seconds on the previous year.

The average attendance time for the first appliance in attendance during July to December 2015 had increased by 45 seconds to 6 minutes and 5 seconds when compared to the previous year.

However, when the attendance times for the TRVs as first appliance in attendance were removed, the overall average attendance time for the Service, during July to December 2015, saw a reduction of 1 second in comparison to the previous year.

The average attendance time to risk level one incidents was 5 minutes and 5 seconds for the first appliance in year one, this was an increase of 1 second when compared to the previous year.

Second appliance attendance

The average attendance time for the second appliance in year one of the IRMP implementation was 6 minutes 12 seconds, an increase of 8 seconds on the previous year.

The average attendance time for the second appliance in attendance during July to December 2015 was 6 minutes and 35 seconds, an increase of 20 seconds in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

Members were then advised of the following:

Wallsend (G) Data

The average attendance time for the first appliance in year one of the IRMP implementation was 5 minutes 24 seconds, an increase of 2 seconds on the previous year. The average attendance time for the first appliance in attendance during July to December 2015 was 5 minutes and 52 seconds, an increase of 36 seconds in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

During July to December 2015 when the attendance times for the TRVs as the first appliance were removed, the average attendance time reduced by 2 seconds in comparison to the previous year, showing a similar pattern to the times for the Service as whole.

The average attendance time for the second appliance to all incidents in year one of the IRMP implementation was 6 minutes 48 seconds, an increase of 30 seconds on the previous year.

Swalwell (Y) Data

The average attendance time for the first appliance in year one of the IRMP implementation was 6 minutes 29 seconds, a decrease of 15 seconds on the previous year.

The average attendance time for the first appliance in attendance during July to December 2015 was 6 minutes and 56 seconds, an increase of 22 seconds in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

Stand Down of Two Appliances Between 00:00 and 08:59

The average attendance time for the first appliance for this time period in year one of the IRMP implementation was 5 minutes 33 seconds, an increase of 17 seconds on the previous year.

During the hours of 00:00 and 08:59 between July and December 2015, the average attendance time for the first appliance was 6 minutes and 10 seconds, an increase of 38 seconds in comparison to the previous year.

The Introduction of Two TRVs Between 18:00 and 00:00

The part time TRVs were introduced on 20th May 2015. Members were referred to the section of the report which covered the six months from July 2015 to December 2015.

The Introduction of Two Full Time TRVs

The full time TRVs were introduced on 4th September 2015. Since this time the full time TRVs attended a total of 724 incidents. The average attendance time for the full time TRVs was 9 minutes and 31 seconds.

The full time TRVs attended 543 (75%) incidents within the 12 minute target time, a further 136 (19%) were within 12 to 15 minutes.

TRV Simultaneous Incidents

Since the introduction of the TRVs, a category 1 or 2 appliance was able to attend 110 incidents whilst a TRV was dealing with a lower risk level incident in the same station area at the same time.

Newcastle Central (C) Data

The average attendance time for the first appliance in attendance during September to December 2015 was 4 minutes and 47 seconds, an increase of 21 seconds in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

Sunderland Central (N) Data

The average attendance time for the first appliance in attendance during September to December 2015 was 5 minutes and 21 seconds, a decrease of 1 second in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

73. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The monitoring update on the actions taken to date be noted; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Integrated Risk Management Plan Update

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority submitted a report to provide the Authority with an update on the implementation of the current Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) actions, and to seek authorisation to develop further IRMP actions during 2016.

ACFO Brindle referred members to the current series of IRMP actions, attached at Appendix A of the report. A significant amount of work had been undertaken and most reviews were complete with many actions moving into the implementation stage.

An update was given in relation to each of the following actions:

- Review of operational response model
- Control review
- Feasibility of a Trading Company
- Management and Organisational Review
- Exploring further joint working with other emergency services and key partners.

As the Authority would be facing continued financial pressures over the next 4 year period, the CFO considered it timely to conduct a further IRMP planning process during 2016/17, with proposed actions being submitted to a future meeting of the Authority. Members welcomed this proposal.

74. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the progress report be noted for information; and
- (ii) the Chief Fire Officer begin a process of determining future IRMP actions, to be subject to further discussion with Authority members.

Apprenticeships, Traineeship and Volunteer Schemes - Update

The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Executive and Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide

members with an update regarding a programme of work aimed at improving the Authority's approach to the use of apprenticeships, traineeships and volunteers across the Authority.

ACFO Baines advised members that there was currently a national drive to raise apprenticeship opportunities. The report therefore recommended that consideration be given to what opportunities there were within the organisation at the end of apprenticeships and also that thought be given to expanding the traditional opportunities so that they covered back office functions as well as technical services and firefigther roles.

ACFO Baines went on to explain that a traineeship was an education and training programme with work experience that unlocked the potential of young people and prepared them for work. These were designed to help young people aged 16-24 and could last anything up to six months (minimum 100 hours).

The Authority currently operated with a cohort of 60 volunteers, which covered a wider age range than apprentices and trainees.

Upon discussion the Authority welcomed these proposals and endorsed the comments made at the Human Resources Committee.

73. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;
- (ii) Support be given to undertaking additional detailed work to broaden the current apprenticeship scheme and to include the consideration of traineeships in the final scheme;
- (iii) the broader engagement of volunteers be noted; and
- (iv) further reports be received as required.

As it was ACFO Brindle's last meeting, the Chairman thanked for her dedication and hard work she had given to the Authority over the last 7 years, and on behalf of the Authority, wished her well for the future. Joy responded accordingly, thanking the Authority and Officers for their support, and wished the organisation every success in the future.

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

74. 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.

