

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, 3RD NOVEMBER, 2008 at
10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor T. Wright in the Chair

Councillors Boyes, Charlton, Clark, M. Forbes, N. Forbes, Heron, Jordan, Renton, Scaplehorn and Woodward.

Part I

Councillor N. Forbes was welcomed to his first Meeting of the Authority and Members paid their respects to Councillor Cooney by virtue of a One Minute Silence.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell, Bollands and Haley.

The Chairman advised the meeting that both Councillors Bollands and Haley had recently been involved in an accident. The Authority wished both members a speedy recovery.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

58. RESOLVED that :-

- (i) the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 3rd November, 2008 –Part I (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record; and
- (ii) the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 27th October 2008 – Part I (Circulated) be received and noted;

Matters Arising

3(i) Minutes of the Authority

Communications Strategy – External Communications Strategy

Members noted that the resolution number for this item should read 48(a).

Membership of the Authority, Appointment of Committees and Appointment of Spokesmen

The Deputy Clerk to the Authority submitted a report (circulated) concerning the notification received regarding the appointments made by constituent Councils to replace Councillors Armstrong and Cooney, and also to appoint to the resulting vacancies on various committees.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

- 59
- (i) the appointment of Councillors Haley and N. Forbes be noted.
 - (ii) the undermentioned members be appointed to serve the committees of the Authority, as indicated:-

Governance Committee	Councillor Haley
Policy Advisory Committee	Councillor N. Forbes
Civil Contingencies Committee	Councillor N. Forbes
Human Resources Committee	Councillors Haley and N. Forbes
Performance Review Committee	Councillor N. Forbes
Appointments Committee	Councillor N. Forbes
Disciplinary Appeals Committee	Councillor N. Forbes
Emergency Sub-Committee	Councillor N. Forbes

- (iii) Councillor N. Forbes be appointed to the North East Regional Management Board.
- (iv) Councillor N. Forbes be appointed as Spokesman for Newcastle City Council for the purpose of answering questions for Members of those Councillors on the discharge of its functions.
- (v) Councillor N. Forbes be appointed as Support Member for Community Engagement and Partnerships, and as Support Member for Diversity and Equality.
- (vi) Councillor N. Forbes be appointed as a representative on The Local Government Association, and
- (viii) Councillor N. Forbes be appointed as Vice-Chairman to the Authority.

Revenue Budget 2008/2009 – Second Review

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a Joint Report (circulated) advising Members of issues relating to the 2008/2009 Revenue Budget position and providing an updated Statement of Balances.

(For copy Report – see original Minutes).

Members were advised that regular monitoring of the Revenue Budget continued to take place and turned their attention to the following:-

- **Employee Costs**

At this stage in the financial year, a net estimated underspend of approximately £320,000.00 was anticipated to arise in relation to Employee costs.

- **Leasing Charges**

It was estimated that there would be an underspend on leasing charges in 2008/2009 of £100,000.00.

Upon discussion, it was:-

60. RESOLVED that the position with regard to the Revenue Budget for 2008/2009 be noted including the updated Statement of Balances.

Capital Programme 2008/2009 – Second Review

The Chief Fire Officer and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) to review the current year's Programme and reflect changes from that presented to the Authority as a consequence of the First Capital Programme Review, on 16th June 2008.

(For copy report – see original Minutes)

The Finance Officer drew the following issues to Members' attention:-

- **Estates – Brigade Training Centre (Security Improvements and Incident Management Training Facilities)**

The development of the USAR Internal Training Area at Barmston Training Centre was a highly specialised and bespoke technical building project, which was at the detailed specification stage. The remainder of the estimated cost of the scheme (£486,478) was to be reprofiled from 2008/2009 to 2009/2010.

- **Operational Equipment – Fireground Radios**

Funding of £20,000 would be carried forward into 2009/2010 and the links added when the new breathing apparatus was procured and brought into operational use. Upon discussion it was:-

61. RESOLVED that the revised Capital Programme for 2008/2009, as set out at Appendix A, be approved.

Annual Report 2007/2008

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) drawing Members attention to the Annual Report 2007/2008.

(For copy report – see original Minutes)

Members were advised that the Annual Report 2008 showed that significant progress was being made against long term targets such as the prevention of fire deaths, which currently averages 4.77 deaths per year.

The points which were noted, included:-

- There was an average of 4.05 injuries in accidental fires per 100,000 population, compared with 5.57 in the previous year.
- Over 33,500 home Fire Risk Assessments (HFRA) were carried out, which had contributed to the reduction in the number of injuries and deaths from accidental fires
- There had been a 14% reduction in the number of fire calls attended

- All BVPI's relating to responding to emergencies were on track to meet the 2011 targets

It was:-

62. RESOLVED that the Annual Report 2007/2008 be approved.

Restructure Of Arson Task Forces

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a Joint Report (circulated) seeking approval to the proposals to re-focus the work of the Arson Task Forces (ATF) in the years ahead and to re-brand them as Neighbourhood Fire Teams.

(For copy report – see original Minutes).

In support of local strategies for community safety and the focus on neighbourhood level solutions, it was proposed that the five ATF's become Neighbourhood Fire Teams, tasked to work at a local level within our five districts, separate from but in partnership with, Neighbourhood Policing Teams and other neighbourhood partners.

Local teams would work to measurably reduce the numbers of ASB fires thereby helping to improve the social space within which people live. In addition, it would also have the additional benefit of reducing the numbers of operational responses by fire appliances, which would free up operational staff to carry out more Home Safety Checks or undertake further operational training.

It was:-

63. RESOLVED that the re-branding of the Arson Task Forces as Neighbourhood Fire Teams be approved, the re-focusing of the work of the team work to that of reducing anti-social behaviour fires be approved and further reports be received.

Bonfire Awareness Campaign Awards

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report (circulated) to inform Members of the success of the 2007 bonfire awareness campaign at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) national marketing awards ceremony, and of the launch of the November 2008 bonfire awareness campaign.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

The 2007 campaign won a number of awards for its innovative and influential nature. the most prestigious of these has been the recent award of 'Best Integrated Campaign in 2008' at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Excellent Awards ceremony.

It was believed this Authority was the first Fire and Rescue Authority in the country to have won a CIPR national award. The announcement was made at a special awards ceremony on 15th September 2008.

At this juncture, Councillor M Forbes questioned how statistics compared to that of other areas. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to provide this detail at the next Meeting of the Authority, for the information of Members.

It was:-

64. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Integrated Risk Management 2008/2009 Action Plan – Second Quarterly Update

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority and the Finance Officer submitted a joint report (circulated) to provide an update for Members in respect of the implementation of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Annual Action Plan for 2008/2009, which was approved by the Authority in March 2008.

(For copy report – see original Minutes)

Members were provided with the following update in relation to the IRMP Action Plan:-

- Monitoring of the effect on operational services of 4 x 4 crewing levels on all two pump community fire stations was continuing.
- Partnerships had been developed in Newcastle and North Tyneside districts, resulting in Carbon Monoxide detectors being fitted in the homes of those identified as being at potential risk.
- A review of the service's existing water rescue and floor incident capability had been carried out and the key findings implemented.
- The draft Road Traffic Collision (RTC) Policy was currently being consulted upon with stakeholders. Stations in North Tyneside and South Tyneside districts had piloted the delivery of road safety training to those members of the community deemed as being at high risk from involvement in RTC incidents.
- Construction work on the Command and Control Training Facility commenced on 4th August 2008 and was due to be completed the end of December 2008.
- Progress continued to be made on the identification of heritage buildings deemed to be at potential risk from fire.
- Work continued with local authorities with the intention of introducing protocols in respect of automatic fire alarms and unwanted fire signals in dwellings.

It was:-

65. RESOLVED that the progress made in relation to the implementation of the 2008/2009 IRMP action plan be endorsed and noted. Further reports be received as appropriate.

Consultation On The National Procurement Strategy For The Fire And Rescue Service 2008 – 2011

The Chief Fire Officer, the Finance Officer and the Clerk to the Authority submitted a joint report (circulated) for the information and approval of Members, the key areas contained within the draft national Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2008/2011 which had been issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) for the purposes of consultation.

(For copy report – see original Minutes)

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members of the four Firebuy options and explained that it was of his view that there was a value to be derived from the continued existence of a national procurement function providing that the function itself is cost effective and that its work benefits Fire and Rescue Authorities. Firebuy Ltd had yet to demonstrate that it had achieved this outcome and until such time as this could be done it should continue to be administered broadly within the existing structure which would provide it with a degree of stable continuity.

Consequently, it was proposed that Option 1 be supported by the Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer proposed that an appropriate response for the Authority would be to emphasise the fact that Firebuy Ltd should continue to receive its core funding from CLG whilst looking to maximise its income stream through procurement activity.

Upon detailed discussion, it was:-

66. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the above report be approved.
- (ii) the Chief Fire Officer respond to the consultation document on behalf of the Authority, in line with the content of this report.

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

67. 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 involves a likely disclosure of exempt information relating to any consultation or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or

negotiations in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority or in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 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.