

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park on, on **Friday 22 February 2018** at 10.00 am.

**Present:**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors A Batey, D Bell, J Bell, C Carr, D Hicks, P Howell, A Laing, R Manchester (substitute for F Tinsley), L Marshall, C Potts, G Richardson, J Robinson, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons, W Stelling, D Stoker and J Turnbull.

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors H Crumbie, B Jones and S Richmond

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Avery, P Brooks, A Gardner, F Tinsley and C Johnson.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Cllr Nicholson.

**A1 Chief Fire Officers Commendations**

Chief Fire Officer Commendations were awarded to members of Newton Aycliffe DCP station for the rescue of a casualty from a significant fire in May 2018 and to blue watch Darlington & blue watch Control for the parts they played in a fire related incident which led to the successful rescue of a casualty in October 2018.

**A2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**A3 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record (for copy see file of minutes).

**A4 Current Correspondence**

The Authority received an update from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Support in relation to current correspondence received from government and other bodies relevant to the Authority and the status of each (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **A5 Notes of the Finance Committee**

The Authority considered a report of the of Finance Committee, which provided an update on the discussions at the meeting held on 29 January 2019 (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

The contents of the report be noted.

#### **A6 Notes of the Performance Committee**

The Authority considered a report of the of the Performance Committee, which provided an update on the discussions at the meeting held on 10 December 2018 (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

The contents of the report be noted.

#### **A7 Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation Feedback 2019-2020**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed Members with the details of the consultation feedback in response to the 2019 – 2020 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chair gave background to meetings that had been held and thanked Cllr Richard Bell and Cllr Heather Scott for lobbying the Conservative Party. The Chief Fire Officer tabled a letter received from Kevan Jones MP and noted his response.

Members thanked the Principal Officers for attending local parish council and residents' association meetings to explain the proposed changes and options.

#### **Resolved:**

- i. That the 2019/20 IRMP outcomes be noted;
- ii. The feedback received when considering the options outline in the ERR paper be considered (item 8 on the agenda).

#### **A8 Emergency Response Review Update**

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery which updated Members on the changes to the Emergency Response (ER) arrangements which are set to be trialled from 1 April 2019, following the ER Review and the IRMP consultation carried out in 2018/19 (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Howell queried whether the FBU's position had been considered regarding accommodation proposals. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that staff who may need to travel

during the trial would receive allowances and that the Service would continue to work with staff and the FBU to try to reach an agreement.

Cllr Simmons noted disappointment in the change to fire cover at Durham. The Chief Fire Officer noted the risk and demand data that had been used to develop the options and explained that after the 1 April, the trial would mean that 3 additional firefighters could be attending an incident in Durham City.

Cllr Stelling queried the obligations of the Service for world heritage sites, the Chief Fire Officer explained that heritage risk was considered as part of the review and that during the trial the resources committed to an incident at the castle or cathedral would not change.

The Chair and Vice Chair reiterated that that they would meet and work with the FBU throughout the trial.

**Resolved:**

- i. That the permanent introduction of the revised staffing system of 4 and 2 at Bishop Auckland and reduction of the Day Crewing plus staffing pool from 14 to 13 at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe from 1 April 2019 be agreed;
- ii. The 2019/20 Emergency Response Review trials be agreed of:-
  - a. Introducing a Day Crewing only shift system at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe from 1 April 2019;
  - b. Moving the second whole time Durham Appliance to Spennymoor from 1 April 2019;
  - c. Operating a 4 and 2 staffing system at Durham.
- iii. Further reports on the progress of the Emergency Response review options be received.

**A9 Budget 2019/20 report under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer which provided information on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves, so that members have authoritative advice available when making the budget decisions (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That members have regard to this report when approving the budget and the level of council tax for 2019/20.

**A10 2019/20 Revenue Budget and Council Tax, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Plan**

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer which set out the revised revenue budget for 2018/19 and proposals for the 2019/20 budget and medium-term

financial plan, the capital budgets for 2019/20 to 2022/23 and the Authority's council tax requirement (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer took the Authority through each section of the report providing an outline of the key information and proposals. Members acknowledged the professional approach adopted in preparing the budget and delivering the report and requested that thanked Tony Hope and his team for all their efforts.

**Resolved:**

**SECTION B – Consultation**

That Members take into account the views of those consulted as they consider the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan proposals.

**SECTION C – Local Government Finance Settlement**

That the Authority notes the 2019/20 settlement funding assessment and the uncertainty around the funding position from 2020/21 onwards.

**SECTION D – Efficiency Plan**

That the Authority notes the progress made in achieving the savings set out in the Efficiency Plan.

**SECTION E – Reserves Strategy**

That the Authority agrees to the policy for reserves, that the Authority will:

- i. Set aside sufficient sums in earmarked reserves as it considers prudent to do so.
- ii. Aim to maintain a general reserve of 5% of the net expenditure, currently £1.425m.

**SECTION F – Medium-Term Financial Plan**

That the Authority:

- (a) Agrees the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- (b) Notes the Treasurer's comments on the robustness of the estimates, the adequacy of reserves and the risks in the budget, as set out in the separate report under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003.

**SECTION G – Revenue Budget**

That the Authority adopts the following resolutions:

- (a) That the revised revenue budget for 2018/19, as set out in Appendix B be approved.
- (b) That the Treasurer be authorised to make any proper accounting transactions that would be in the interests of the Authority in relation to the accounts for 2018/19.
- (c) That the revenue budget for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix B be approved.

**SECTION H – Capital Strategy**

That the Authority approves the revised capital budget for 2018/19 and the capital budgets for 2019/20 to 2022/23.

## **SECTION I – Fire Authority Council Tax Requirement**

- (a) That the Authority determine the level of Council Tax for 2019/20.
- (b) Based on the Net Expenditure of £28,409,200 and the Band D Council Tax of £103.50 the Authority adopts the following resolutions for the year ending 31st March 2020:
  - i. That the 'council tax base' for the whole of the Authority's area be £172,612.50.
  - ii. That there be no Authority expenses relating to a part only of the Authority's area.
  - iii. That the Authority increases Council Tax by 2.95% to £103.50 for a Band D property.
  - iv. That the Net Expenditure be £28,409,200 and that, (after taking into account revenue support grant of £3,424,035 business rates income of £1,408,885, top up grant of £5,599,886, and a surplus on the collection fund of £111,000, precepts totalling £17,865,393.75 be issued to Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council.

## **SECTION J – Prudential Code**

- (a) That the Authority notes the prudential indicators.
- (b) That the Authority approves the MRP Statement.
- (c) That the Authority approves the following limits for external debt in 2019/20:
  - i. Authorised Limit of £11.701m
  - ii. Operational Boundary of £10.637m

## **SECTION K – Treasury Management**

- (a) That the Authority formally adopts the key recommendations of the CIPFA code.
- (b) That the Authority notes the Annual Treasury Management Strategy.
- (c) That the Authority sets an upper limit on its fixed interest rate exposures for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 of 100% of its net outstanding principal sum.
- (d) That the Authority sets an upper limit on its variable interest rate exposures for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 of 30% of its net outstanding principal sums.

### **A11 Charging for Unwanted Fire Signals**

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Community Risk Management, which detailed a proposal to trial to charge for repeated Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) in premises that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) applies to (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

- i. Authority to be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer to take into consideration the outcome of the consultation process and commence a trial from 1 April 21019 for a 12-month period was agreed;
- ii. Receive further reports as the trial progresses was agreed.

**A12 Fire and Rescue Authorities: Incident Statistics: Bulletin for England April 2017 to March 2018**

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Community Risk Management, which provided a comparative analysis of key operational performance indicators (PIs) within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) against national reports published annually by the Home Office (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

The contents of the report be noted.

**A13 Fire and Rescue Service Inspections 2018/19**

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Training Assets and Assurance, which provided members with a summary of the findings from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) tranche one inspections and an update on the next steps in the inspection process.

**Resolved:**

The contents of the report be noted.

**A14 Safer Futures "Live" (School Safety Carousel)**

The Authority considered a report of the Member Champion for Community Safety which provided members with an update on the Safer Futures 'Live' organised by the Service and to encourage members to continue to promote the benefits of the event.

Members commented on the importance of this event and encouraged members to attend.

**Resolved:**

The contents of the report be noted.

**A15 AOB**

There was no other business.

**A16 Exclusion of the public**

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

**B17 Fire Fatality Presentation**

This item was deferred to the next meeting on Tuesday 19 March.

**B18 AOB**

There was no other business.

**Significant Dates**

Saturday 2 March – Blues and Twos Ball

Next CFA meeting Tuesday 19 March

**CLOSE OF MEETING**