

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 **Tuesday 19 March 2019** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors B Avery, A Batey, D Bell, J Bell, P Brookes, D Hicks, P Howell, A Laing, L Marshall, C Potts, J Robinson, J Shuttleworth, W Stelling and F Tinsley.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors H Crumbie, C Johnson and B Jones.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Carr, A Gardner, G Richardson, S Richmond, M Simmons, D Stoker and J Turnbull

The Chair noted congratulations on behalf of the fire authority for winning UK fire and rescue service of the year at the 2019 IESE Public Sector Transformation Awards.

The Chair informed members that Cllr Sue Richmond had confirmed that she would not be standing for re election at the upcoming Darlington elections. The authority noted their thanks and best wishes.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chair clarified that apologies had been received from those members appointed directors of the Community Interest Company and Vital Fire Solutions.

A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record (for copy see file of minutes).

A3 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).

A4 Notes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Audit and Risk Committee, which provided an update on the discussions at the meeting held on 28 February 2019 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

A5 Notes of the Performance Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Performance Committee, which provided an update on the discussions at the meeting held on 7 March 2019 (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Jones highlighted discussion around the importance of committee meeting attendance.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

A6 Localism Act Pay Policy Statement 2019/20

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer and Clerk which sought approval of the pay policy statement for 2019/20.

Resolved:

- a) That the 2019/20 pay policy statement as set out in Appendix A be approved.
- b) Note that the statement will be published on the Authority's website.

A7 Performance Report Quarter Three 2018/19

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager Community Risk Management which presented a summary of organisational performance at the end of the third quarter of the 2018/19 financial year.

Members commented on the figures for vehicle accidents and the ongoing work around restricted access by parked vehicles.

Members discussed the data presented for primary fires in non-domestic premises and requested that absolute and variation figures were included in future reports to add context.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

A8 Subsidiary Companies Audit Exemption and Financial Guarantee

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer which outlined a change to the Authority's accounting and audit arrangements to include group financial statements incorporating the subsidiary companies Vital Fire Solutions (VFS) and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Community Interest Company (CIC).

The report also sought approval for the provision of parent undertaking guarantees for both VFS and the CIC.

Members queried the risk associated with the changes. T Hope confirmed that there would be very little risk as the majority of transactions were between the authority and the subsidiary companies.

Members queried the proposed fees. T Hope clarified that the increase in the 2018/19 audit fee was for the additional work to be carried out and would be offset by the overall saving in audit fees.

Members highlighted that the proposal was discussed at the Audit and Risk committee and no concerns were raised.

Resolved:

- a) That the change to the Authority's accounting and audit arrangements to include group financial statements which consolidate the accounts of VFS and the CIC with those of the Fire Authority be noted.
- b) That authority be delegated to the Treasurer to provide parent undertaking guarantees for 2018/19 and subsequent years on behalf of VFS and the CIC to Companies House.

A9 AOB

There was no other business.

A10 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.

B11 Long Service and Good Conduct Medal

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which identified members of staff who had satisfactorily completed twenty years' service.

Resolved:

That a recommendation be made for the names to be submitted to the relevant Government department for the award of the Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

B12 Fire Fatality Presentation

The Area Manager Training Assets and Assurance delivered a presentation to members in relation to a fire at Consett.

Members commented on the efficient communications between fire service control rooms and noted thanks to the staff involved.

B18 AOB

The Group Manager Assurance joined the meeting to provide an update regarding the HMICFRS inspection programme.

There was no other business.

CLOSE OF MEETING