

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park on **Friday 14 June 2019** at 10.00 am.

**Present:**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors B Avery, D Bell, R Bell, P Brookes, C Carr, M Davinson (substitute for J Bell), D Freeman, D Hicks, A Laing, L Maddison, R Manchester, L Marshall, C Potts, G Richardson, J Robinson, E Scott, J Shuttleworth, M Simmons (substitute for D Freeman), D Stoker, F Tinsley and J Turnbull.

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors B Jones and G Lee.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Batey, J Bell, D Freeman, H Crumbie and A Scott.

The Chair welcomed the new members to the Authority and thanked members who were not returning.

The Chair noted the awards that the Service had won in the last 12 months.

The Chair noted Cllr Brookes cycle ride and asked for any donations for Age UK Durham.

**A1 Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs B Jones and G Lee declared a declaration of interest in item 13.

**A2 Appointment of Chairs and Committees**

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk which proposed the appointments of Chairs and Membership of Committees for 2019/20 (for copy see file of minutes). Cllr R Bell proposed a change to the representation on the Finance Committee and that he replace Cllr G Richardson. Cllr Richardson supported this amendment.

**Resolved:**

- i. That the political membership of the committees as set out in Appendix 1 be approved, with the amendment to the Finance Committee with Cllr R Bell replacing Cllr G Richardson.
- ii. That the appointment of the chairs of the committees as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.
- iii. That the Clerk to the Authority, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and the appropriate Group Leader, be authorised to make any changes to the Committees that may arise during 2019/20.

### **A3 Representation on Other Bodies 2019/20**

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk which set out the proposed appointment of representatives on other bodies for 2019/20 (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

- i. That the appointments to the Combined Fire Authority's other bodies as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
- ii. That the Clerk to the Authority, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and the appropriate Group Leader, be authorised to make any changes to the appointments on other bodies that may arise during 2019/20.

### **A4 Appointment of Minority Party Spokesperson**

That Councillor J Shuttleworth be appointed as minority party spokesperson for the ensuing year.

### **A5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 March 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

### **A6 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).

### **A7 Notes of the Audit and Risk Committee**

The Authority considered a report of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, which provided an update on the discussions at the meeting held on 21 May 2019 (for copy see file of minutes).

### **A8 Appointment of Independent Persons**

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk which provided the outcome of the Appointments Panel on 26 April 2019 and the appointment of new Independent Persons (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

- i. That the outcome of the Appointments Panel held on 26 April 2019 be noted
- ii. That the Chair, on behalf of the Authority, write to the outgoing Independent Person to thank them for their contribution during their term in office.

## **A9 Amendments to the Delegated Powers of the Combined Fire Authority's Appeals Panel**

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to seek amendment to the delegated powers of the Appeals Panel to enable the committee to hear appeals under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the terms of reference for the Appeals Panel be amended to include delegated responsibility to hear appeals under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP).

## **A10 Member Champions**

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Support which set out details of the Authority's Member Champion roles and seeks nominations for the individual roles for the forthcoming two-year period (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

- i. Member Champion roles set out in the report and as detailed at Appendix A – H be noted
- ii. The expression of interest forms in Appendix I be submitted by email by no later than 27 June be noted
- iii. The Fire Authority will approve the Member Champions at the Combined Fire Authority meeting on 16 July 2019 be noted.

## **A11 Member Buddy System and Affiliation with Fire Stations**

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Support which confirmed the Senior Leadership Team contacts for the member buddy arrangements and the fire station affiliation list (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the member buddy and station affiliation list set out in Appendix A and B were noted.

## **A12 Local Government Association (LGA) Subscription**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which provided details of the LGA subscription for 2019/20 and noted the loyalty and prompt payment discount (for copy see file of minutes).

### **Resolved:**

That the LGA subscription for 2019/20 be agreed.

### **A 13 Contribution to Darlington Partnership**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which requested Members to consider the financial contribution to the One Darlington Partnership (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

That the financial contribution to the One Darlington Partnership of £7,500 per annum for 2019/20 was approved.

### **A14 Strategic Planning Day**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which set out the areas discussed at the CFA Strategic Planning Day on 3 May 2019 (for copy see file of minutes). Cllr Shuttleworth requested more options for dates be given for the next Planning Day to ensure a good attendance. The Chair added that earlier notification of the proposed date could be considered so that Members could save the date.

#### **Resolved:**

The outcomes of the 3 May 2019 CFA Strategic Planning day were discussed and noted.

### **A15 Member Attendance at Conference**

The Authority considered a report of the Chair which provided feedback from the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Conference (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

### **A16 Performance Report – Quarter Four 2018/19**

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager Emergency Response which presented a summary of organisational performance at the end of the fourth quarter of the 2018/19 financial year (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Maddison queried arrangements with other agencies for visiting derelict buildings. Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery noted that the Service works closely with partner agencies and a protocol is in place. Also, at district level, station personnel are involved in walk arounds in their local area.

Cllr Lee queried second hand white goods. Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery noted that the service works with Trading Standards and noted the websites were recalls on appliances can be checked.

#### **Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

#### **A17 Sickness Absence Performance**

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Workforce Development which provided members with an update on sickness absence performance for the full reporting year (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Maddison queried the Service's social media policy. The Head of Workforce Development outlined the approach taken by the Service in relation to Social Media. The Chief Fire Officer explained the positive influence social media can have for the Service, including: the promotion of key safety messages; keeping the public informed of activities the Service is involved in; and assisting with consultation with the public

Cllr Tinsley queried muscular injuries which were recorded in the report and asked if this was age related. The Head of Workforce Development noted that average age of whole time firefighters is 44 – 45 years and muscular injuries are a large part of sickness later in careers.

#### **Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

#### **A18 Discretions under the Firefighter Pension Schemes**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer which sought members approval of a number of employer obligations and discretions in respect of the Firefighter Pension Schemes (for copy see file of minutes).

#### **Resolved:**

- i. That the Statement of Firefighter Pension Schemes – Scheme Member Obligations and Discretions (Appendix A) were approved
- ii. That the Chief Fire Officer in conjunction with the Treasurer to exercise pension scheme discretions acting as Scheme Manager on behalf of the Authority. Where the Discretion is related to the Chief Fire Officer then the relevant decision(s) will be made by the Combined Fire Authority following a recommendation from the Treasurer were given delegated authority.

#### **A19 Restricting Exit Payments in the Public Sector: Consultation on Implementation of Regulations**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed members of the Government's consultation to implement the cap on the exit payments that certain public sector employees could receive when leaving their organisation (for copy see file of minutes). Members debated the potential impact of submitting a response to the consultation on lower paid staff and the position that has been adopted in the two constituent authorities.

#### **Resolved:**

- i. The Government's consultation to implement the cap on the exit payments and the associated impact to the Authority be noted.
- ii. That the Authority would not be submitting a response to the consultation.

#### **A20 Fire Cadets**

The Authority considered a report of the Member Champion for Fire Cadets which provided members with an update on the Service's Fire Cadet Scheme (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Scott queried how the service recruited Cadets. Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery noted that local schools are contacted and a central database is held.

#### **Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

#### **A21 Update on Retained Duty System (RDS)**

The Authority considered a report of the Member Champion – RDS which provided members with an update and insight into the RDS currently operating within County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

The Area Manager Emergency Response noted the challenges facing RDS recruitment and the Service was supporting national campaign to recruit RDS personnel and looking at innovative ways to recruit.

#### **Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

#### **A22 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

A minutes silence was held in memory of Grenfell.

#### **Significant Dates**

Charity Afternoon Tea at Peterlee Fire Station in aid of Chemotherapy Ward at Hartlepool hospital.

Monday 15 July – Friday 19 July HMICFRS fieldwork week

#### **CLOSE OF MEETING**