

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held in Morton Room, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW, on **Tuesday 17 March 2020** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors A Batey, D Bell, J Bell, R Bell, C Carr, D Freeman, D Hicks, J Maitland, R Manchester, C Potts, J Robinson and J Shuttleworth.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors B Jones and A Scott.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Avery, H Crumbie, A Laing, G Lee, L Maddison, L Marshall, G Richardson, E Scott, D Stoker, F Tinsley and J Turnbull.

Independent Person:

Apologies were received from N Johnson and A Simpson.

The Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance under the covid-19 circumstances and requested that a thank you go out to all staff on behalf of the authority.

The Chief Fire Officer provided an update regarding the position with Covid-19 noting that the Service is well prepared with a detailed business continuity plan aligned to Public Health England guidance. In order to protect staff and public there would be an increased cleaning regime, limited access to estates and review of non-emergency activities and meetings. Members commented on possible effects to community initiatives and ongoing estates work.

A1 Chief Fire Officer Commendations

Chief Fire Officer Commendations were awarded to Martin Lonsdale and Stephen Brown for their outstanding bravery and decisive intervention, rescuing a member of the public from a burning vehicle following a road traffic collision on 8th December 2019.

A2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (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 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 18 February 2020 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A6 Notes of the Performance Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Chair of the Performance Committee which provided an update on the discussions at the meeting held on 2 March 2020 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A7 Localism Act – Pay Policy Statement 2020/21

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer and Clerk which sought approval of the pay policy statement 2020/21.

Resolved:

- a) The 2020/21 pay policy statement as set out at Appendix A be approved.
- b) It was agreed that the statement would be published on the Authority's website.

A8 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Consultation 2019-2020 interim results

The Authority considered a report of the Policy Support Officer which provided information regarding the results of the IRMP consultation which ended on 6 March 2020 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer circulated a response from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for members to consider when making their decisions and highlighted that it was received after the consultation closing date. The Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery provided a summary of the key areas and addressed some of the statements and queries from the response.

Members expressed disappointment that the response was received after the closing date and queried whether the IRMP was shared with the FBU. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that it was shared and raised with the FBU prior to public consultation to ensure transparency

Councillor Carr noted that no concerns had been raised by unions at the Health and Safety Committee.

Councillor R Bell suggested that further discussion between the Service and FBU should take place outside of this meeting.

Councillor R Bell requested an update around the position with RDS. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery noted many changes in society since the introduction of the RDS model and outlined measures the service were taking around support and flexibility. Discussions were taking place nationally regarding RDS issues.

The adoption of the IRMP was moved by Councillor Carr and seconded by Councillor Scott.

Resolved:

- a) That the survey results be considered as part of decisions on allocation of Service resources.
- b) That the survey outcomes be noted.
- c) That the Authority formally adopted the IRMP for 2020/21 – 2022/23.

A9 Performance Report Quarter Three 2019/20

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager Emergency Response which gave a summary of organisational performance at the end of the third quarter of the 2019/20 financial year (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report were noted.

A10 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group Update

The Authority considered a report of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion which gave an overview of the work carried out by the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report were noted.

A11 Evaluation of Charging for Unwanted Fire Signals Trial

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery which provided an evaluation of the 12-month trial which commenced on 1 April 2019, to charge for repeated Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) in premises that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) applies to. Due to the success of the trial, it recommended that Members approve the implementation of this process on a permanent basis. (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- a) That the contents of the report were noted.
- b) That the implementation of the cost recovery process for repeated UwFS in premises that the FSO applies to, be approved on a permanent basis from 1 April 2020.

A12 Evaluation of the Emergency Response Review Trial 2019-20

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery which provided an evaluation of the Emergency Response (ER) review trial which commenced on 1 April 2019 and recommended the next steps for the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to consider (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- a) That the content of the report be noted.
- b) Implementation of the trial staffing arrangements at Durham and Spennymoor fire stations be approved on a permanent basis from 01 April 2020;
- c) Extension of the trial at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe fire stations be approved for six months, then receive a further report on the current position and reconsider the longer-term position.

A13 Enabling Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's) to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed members that the Government has published a statutory instrument (S.I.) enabling Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that elections had been postponed until 2021 due to the current position with Covid-19.

Resolved:

- a) The contents of the report and the publication of the S.I. be noted.
- b) Note that the Chair and Vice Chair will seek an early meeting with the newly elected PCVC to discuss governance arrangements and collaboration.

A14 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

A15 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.

B16 Long Service and Good Conduct Medal

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed Members of those staff who have satisfactorily completed twenty years' service. (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the names are submitted to the relevant Government Department for the award of the Fire Brigade Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

B17 Any Other Business

The Chair tabled a motion to ensure that, during these exceptional times, the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation, wherever possible, with the Chair, Vice Chair, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer, had the appropriate delegation to take whatever action was considered necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the fire and rescue service. If the Chief Fire Officer utilised any delegation over and above what was included in the Constitution, they would report this at the earliest convenience to the Combined Fire Authority.

Resolved:

That for the duration of the Covid-19 crisis the Chief Fire Officer in consultation, wherever possible, with the Chair, Vice Chair, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer, had the appropriate

delegation to take whatever action was considered necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the fire and rescue service.

The Chair provided an update regarding timelines for the recruitment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer and appointments of Area Managers.

The Chief Fire Officer provided a further update regarding Covid-19 with regards to finance, staffing and arrangements with partners. Discussion took place regarding a review of CFO delegated powers to assist with decision making during this period and was moved by Councillor Batey and seconded by Councillor Carr.

CLOSE OF MEETING