

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held remotely, on **Friday 24 July 2020** at 10.00 am.

**Present:**

**Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors A Batey, D Bell, R Bell, C Carr, D Freeman, A Laing, L Maddison, J Maitland, R Manchester, L Marshall, C Potts, J Robinson, E Scott, J Shuttleworth D Stoker, F Tinsley J Turnbull.

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors H Crumbie, B Jones and G Lee.

Apologies for absence were received from J Bell, D Hicks and G Richardson.

**Independent Person:**

A Simpson and N Johnson.

The Chair welcomed all to the first remote live meeting.

The Chair welcomed Steve Helps DCFO to his first meeting.

The Chair thanked all members of staff for their work through Covid-19, Sarah Natrass for her work Chairing the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG), Stuart Errington for his work keeping the Members informed; for his work Chairing the LRF, Co-chairing the Regional Coordinating Group and with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Gold Group. .

Cllr Laing proposed a letter to be sent out to all staff thanking them for all their hard work throughout Covid-19, which was agreed.

**A1     Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**A2     Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

### **A3 Current Correspondence**

The Authority received an update from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer 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 Review of the Constitution**

The Authority considered a joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk which sought approval for the proposed amendments to the Authority's Constitution (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- a) The contents of the report and suggested amendments to the Constitution were noted
- b) The constitution was approved

### **A5 Performance Report Quarter Four 2019/20**

The Authority considered a report of the Chair of the Performance and Programme board which presented a summary of the organisational performance at the end of the fourth quarter of the 2019/20 financial year (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Carr asked for the service versus national analysis to be presented to the next Performance Committee meeting.

Cllr Lee queried the percentage of targets achieved. The Chief Fire Officer commented that the targets that were set were realistic but challenging. The Service sets deliberately challenging targets in order to drive strong performance. The performance management regime that is in place ensures that any targets that aren't achieved are scrutinised by both officers and through the Performance Committee so that action can be taken.

Cllr Bell requested that sickness figures were closely monitored moving forward.

Cllr Batey noted that Covid-19 related absences i.e. shielding would distort data and asked for Covid-19 related sickness to be extrapolated for the next report.

**Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

### **A6 Estates Update**

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Corporate Resources which updated members on the latest position in relation to the Estates Improvement Programme (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Jones noted the brilliant progress being made at Darlington station. Cllr Lee noted the progress that had been made at the station and how complementary the staff had been of the temporary accommodation.

Cllr Shuttleworth noted the collaboration between NEAS and the Service at Sedgefield and questioned whether or not a request to collaborate might be made by Durham Constabulary at a later date. The Head of Corporate Services noted that discussions had taken place with both NEAS and Durham Constabulary in relation to collaboration at the station.

**Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**A7 The Service's response to Covid- 19**

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed members of the activity the Service had been undertaking during the Covid-19 Pandemic (for copy see file of minutes).

Members queried the additional funding from the Home Office and the Treasurer noted the funding was in line with the Service's current predictions in relation to additional costs.

Cllr Shuttleworth queried mental wellbeing of staff working from home. The Chief Fire Officer noted the Service's plan on staff returning to work.

Cllr Tinsley encouraged the Chief Fire Officer to continue to lobby the Home Office for funding moving forward.

**Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**A8 Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**A9 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.

**PART B**

**B10 Business Case – Service Restructure**

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer which provided members with details of a proposed restructure which will ensure the Service is well placed to address the challenges faced over the medium term (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

- a) The report was noted
- b) The revised structure was approved

**B11 Fire Fatality Presentation**

Area Manager: Projects delivered a presentation to members in relation to a fire at Easington.

**B12 Any Other Business**

The Chief Fire Officer noted the statement made in the House of Commons on 22 July in relation to Police and Crime Commissioners.

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

**CLOSE OF MEETING**