

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held remotely, on **Monday 21 September 2020** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors B Avery, A Batey, D Bell, R Bell, A Laing, L Maddison, R Manchester, L Marshall, C Potts, G Richardson, J Robinson, Cllr M Simmons (substitute for Cllr E Scott), D Stoker, F Tinsley J Turnbull.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors B Jones, G Lee and A Scott.

Apologies for absence were received from J Bell, C Carr, D Hicks, D Freeman, J Maitland, E Scott, J Shuttleworth, H Crumbie,

Independent Person:

A Simpson

The Chair welcomed all to the remote live meeting.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 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 Notes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Authority considered a report of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee which provided members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 28 July 2020. (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Turnbull queried if there had been an update regarding signing off of the accounts. T Hope noted that the auditors were still aiming for the end of October.

Cllr Turnbull thanked everyone for all their hard work throughout this trying time who have been working on the Audit and Risk Committee.

Resolved:

Members noted the outstanding action.

A5 Notes of the Performance Committee

The Authority received an update from the Chair of the Performance Committee which provided members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Performance Committee held on 3 September 2020. (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A6 Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Community Risk Management which gave a summary of organisational performance at the end of the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A7 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group Update

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer which gave members an overview of the work carried out by the Service's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group (EDIG). (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A8 Grant Funding for Fire Protection

The Authority considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which provided members with details of additional government funding which has been allocated to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to support the fire protection work during 2020/21 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A9 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Update

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager Assets and Assurance which provided members with an update on the current position and next steps of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate

A10 Fire Safety – Government Consultation

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Community Risk Management which provided members with a precis of the Government's consultation on changes to the fire safety legislation and how it is proposed to implement the recommendations set out in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report that require new legislation (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chair advised more information would be released after a national meeting with the Home Office which was taking place on 5 October 2020.

Cllr Lee re-emphasised a point he had previously made that fire officers are able to look at building drawings for houses of multiple occupancy rather than at the building stage.

Cllr Lee noted that some multi occupancy building owners do not carry out all the necessary fire precautions and who enforces. He continued to note that there should be re visitor registers and front doors.

K Wanley noted Cllr Lee's concerns noting the Fire Safety Bill is proposing to amend the Fire Safety Order. It will clarify that it will apply to structures and fire doors for example, therefore the Fire Authority will have greater powers of enforcement.

Cllr Maddison requested clarification on question 66. K Wanley advised that he would investigate the response and feedback to members.

Resolved:

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) Approve the draft response to the consultation attached as Appendix 1

A11 Statement of Assurance 2019/20

The Authority considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive providing members with the 2019/20 Statement of Assurance (SoA) for approval prior to publication (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

Members to approve the 2019/20 Statement of Assurance.

A12 Arson Reduction Team Progress

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager, Community Risk Management following the introduction of the Arson Reduction Team (ART) in 2018, the purpose of the report is to inform members of the progress made by the ART and highlight the strategic benefits gained (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor J Robinson wished the ART team all the best in the Police awards event.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

A13 Land at Fylands Bridge Bishop Auckland

The Authority considered a report of the Head of Corporate Resources to seek Authority approval for the dedication of land adjacent to Bishop Auckland Community Fire Station to Durham County Council (DCC) for use as a public highway (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

Members agreed to provide letter of dedication to be sent to DCC to enable the access road to be used as a public highway.

A14 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Cllr J Robinson on behalf of himself, the Vice Chair Cllr Audrey Laing and all the CFA members, thanked Stuart Errington, Steve Helps, Tony Hope and all officers for continuing with "business as usual" despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

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.

PART B

B16 Impact of Covid-19 on Sickness Absence

The Authority considered a report of the Head of People and Organisational Development and Head of Assets and Assurance which provided members with an overview of the Service's approach to absence due to Covid-19 (C-19) pandemic, the impacts and the support that has been given to our workforce (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Laing commented this was an excellent report. Cllr R Bell echoed Cllr Laing's comments.

Councillor Lee asked if we would get any money back from Government. TH outlined the funding that had been received from government in relation to Covid-19

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

B17 Staffing Arrangements at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe

The Authority considered a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer which provided an update on the staffing arrangements at both Newton Aycliffe and Seaham, following the Evaluation of the Emergency Response Review Trial Report submitted to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in March 2020 (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

- a) Approve the implementation of Day Crewing at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe on a permanent basis, in line with the 2020/21 IRP recommendation, providing a collective agreement can be negotiated with the FBU
- b) Should a collective local agreement not be successfully negotiated with the FBU, receive a further paper outlining the additional options and recommendation for the permanent crewing arrangements at Seaham and Newton Aycliffe.

B18 Public Service Pensions Consultation Update

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer to inform members of the Treasury's decision to lay before Parliament the consultation document 'Public service pension schemes: changes to the transitional arrangements to the 2015 schemes' which details proposals regarding public service pensions and an update on the implications for the Authority.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

B19 Review of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which outlined the review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC's) and the potential implications for the Authority.

Resolved:

- a) Note the report and the ongoing review into the role of PCC's
- b) Note the written submission made on behalf of the Authority to the key research questions.
- c) Receive further reports once the outcomes of the review are known.

B20 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

CLOSE OF MEETING