

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at **Council Hall, Durham** on **Thursday 20 July 2021** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, B Avery, A Batey, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, N Jones, L Kennedy, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Mavin, I McLean, M McGaun, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, J Shuttleworth, S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillor H Crumbie, G Lee and A Scott

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Bell, B Kellett, C Marshall, K Rooney, B Jones

There were no substitutions.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021 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 Committee Membership

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk to approve the Committee Membership for the Authority for 2021/22.

The political balance of the Pensions Board was highlighted and discussed. Cllr Atkinson proposed as Labour representative, seconded by Cllr Batey.

Resolved:

- i. **Approved** the Committee membership for 2021/22 for:
 - a. Appointments Panel
 - b. Appeals Committee
 - c. Audit and Finance Committee
 - d. Human Resources Committee
 - e. Performance Committee
 - f. Joint Consultative Committee

- g. Pension Board
 - h. Salary Review Group
- ii. **Agreed** that the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority and the appropriate Group Leader be authorised to make any changes to the Committees that may arise during 2021/22.

A5 Member Champions

The Authority considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer informing Members of the appointment of Member Champions and to provide details of Officer contacts for each Member Champion role for the forthcoming two-year period.

Resolved:

- i. the list of Member Champions were approved

A6 Member Buddy System and Affiliation with Fire Stations

The Authority considered a report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirming the Service Leadership Team (SLT) contacts for the Member 'Buddy' arrangements and the fire station affiliation list.

Resolved:

- i. The Member Buddy and Station Affiliation list as set out in Appendices A and B was noted.

A7 Member Code of Conduct

The Authority received a report from the Clerk inviting members to approve a revised Code of Conduct for Members of the Authority.

Resolved:

- i. The revised Code of Conduct for Members was adopted.

A8 Member Induction

The Authority received a report from the Policy Support Officer setting out the proposed arrangements for the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) Member inductions

Resolved:

- i. Arrangements for Member Induction noted and agreed.

A9 Independent Persons Report

The Authority was presented with a report from the Clerk informing the Authority of the resignation of Mr Andrew Simpson as the Independent Person and to determine whether a recruitment exercise should be undertaken to fill the vacancy.

Debate took place regarding options outlined in paragraph 8 of the report. As there was no consensus for option 1, 2 or 3, a vote was conducted.

Resolved:

- i. The resignation of Andrew Simpson as the Independent Person was noted and he was thanked for his support to the Authority
- ii. Options set out in paragraph 8 of the report considered and option 3 to be taken forward following a majority vote
- iii. A recruitment exercise to be undertaken that this be in accordance with paragraph 9 of the report.

Action: Further report to be presented at a future CFA meeting providing an update.

A10 Performance Report Quarter Four 2020/21

The Authority received a report from the Area Manager, Community Risk Management presenting a summary of organisational performance at the end of the fourth quarter of the 2020/21 financial year.

It was highlighted that there is a downward trend on the number of dwelling fires and the Service is focusing on reducing the number of deliberate fires.

Cllr Atkinson asked about the difference between arson and vandalism and how this can be addressed through the criminal justice system. Clarification was provided, highlighting that multi-agency work is taking place to tackle the issue.

Cllr Lee raised concerns around the number of false alarms which are outside the AFA system. Members were assured that measures are in place to try to reduce the number of false alarms received.

He also raised shifts lost at corporate level. ACFO Natrass explained it was due to Covid and people on long term sick or shielding.

Action: A report is to be presented to the Performance Committee on corporate staff sickness.

Resolved:

- i. content of the report noted

A11 Update on the Position Around Staff Pay 2021

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer outlining the latest position in relation to pay claims in the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) sector and the potential impact on the Authority.

Cllr Atkinson enquired if all models are comparative and relative in terms of diversity and equality. CFO Errington explained that the Grey and Gold books are comparable but Green book has different terms and conditions and pension scheme. There is an issue around diversity in the sector in terms of the make up of operational staff but we have a number of initiatives in place to help address this.

Resolved:

- i. Position in relation to pay awards for the various staff groups for 2021 noted
- ii. Financial impact and further measures to balance the budget for 2021/22 noted

A12 Any Other Business

No items of any other business.

A13 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

B 14 Estates Update

The Head of Corporate Resources presented a report to the Authority updating members on the latest position in relation to the Estates Improvement Programme (EIP).

Resolved:

The report was noted.

B15 Firefighters Pension Scheme

The Treasurer presented a report to the Authority in respect of the Firefighters Pension Scheme (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

The recommendations in the report were approved.

B16 Any Other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

The Authority received an update on the emergency response following an incident on the A1(M) on 15 July 2021.

Cllr Shuttleworth expressed his condolences to families on behalf of the Authority.

CLOSE OF MEETING