

Minutes of the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington held at Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham on 25 June 2024 at 13.30 pm.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, I Cochrane, C Hampson, L Hovvels (substitute for S Quinn), N Jones, L Maddison, C Marshall, C Martin, J Quinn, K Rooney, K Shaw, J Shuttleworth, D Sutton-Lloyd (substitute for G Richardson) and S Zair.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillor G Lee, M Snedker and D Ray.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Anderson, S Quinn and G Richardson.

Independent Persons:

C Hugill

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Appointment of Chair

The Clerk outlined the standing orders under which the appointments can place. Members were asked for nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority.

Appointment of Chair

A proposal and second was received for Cllr J Shuttleworth as Chair of the Combined Fire Authority.

Members **agreed** to appoint Cllr J Shuttleworth as Chair of the Combined Fire Authority.

Appointment of Vice Chair

A proposal and second was received for Cllr C Martin as Vice Chair of the Combined Fire Authority.

Members **agreed** to appoint Cllr C Martin as Vice Chair of the Combined Fire Authority.

The Chair welcomed new members Cllr L Maddison and I Cochrane to their first meeting of the Combined Fire Authority and thanked Cllr J Blakey and Cllr P Sexton for their contributions.

The Chair congratulated the 45 staff who received Long Service Awards during a special celebration event at Durham Town Hall on 12 June and thanked all staff who

organised the Open Day at Darlington station on 15 June to celebrate 50 years since Darlington and County Durham joined together as a Service.

A3 Appointment of Opposition Group Leader

The Clerk asked Members for nominations for the Opposition Group Leader of the Authority. Cllr C Marshall proposed Cllr S Quinn as Opposition Group Leader and this was seconded by Cllr A Batey.

Members **agreed** to appoint Cllr S Quinn.

Cllr C Marshall noted that Cllr S Quinn is currently unwell and that he would be her point of contact until she returns.

A4 Appointment of Chairs and Committees

The Authority received a report seeking approval of Chairs of the Committees for the Authority 2024/25.

The Clerk highlighted that the remainder of the of committee membership would be agreed via group leaders following the meeting.

The Clerk asked Members for nominations for each committee Chair.

Appeals Committee

A proposal and second was received for Cllr J Shuttleworth. Members agreed to appoint Cllr J Shuttleworth as Chair of the Appeals Committee.

Audit and Finance Committee

A proposal and second was received for Cllr R Bell. Members agreed to appoint Cllr R Bell as Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee.

Human Resources Committee

A proposal and second was received for Cllr S Zair. Members agreed to appoint Cllr S Zair as Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

Joint Consultative Committee

A proposal and second was received for Cllr J Shuttleworth. Members agreed to appoint Cllr J Shuttleworth as Chair of the Joint Consultative Committee.

Pension Board

A proposal and second was received for Cllr J Atkinson. Members agreed to appoint Cllr J Atkinson as Chair of the Pensions Board.

Performance Committee

A proposal and second was received for Cllr J Quinn. Members agreed to appoint Cllr J Quinn as Chair of the Performance Committee.

Resolved:

- i. Appoint Chairs for 2024/25 for:
 - a. The chair of the Appeals Committee was **agreed** as Cllr J Shuttleworth
 - b. The chair of the Audit and Finance Committee was **agreed** as Cllr R Bell
 - c. The chair of the Human Resources Committee was **agreed** as Cllr S Zair
 - d. The chair of the Joint Consultative Committee was **agreed** as Cllr J Shuttleworth
 - e. The chair of the Pension Board was **agreed** as Cllr J Atkinson
 - f. The chair of the Performance Committee was agreed as Cllr J Quinn
- ii. The appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority to the Joint Consultative Committee in accordance with the constitution Section 5 paragraph 2.1 were **agreed**.
- iii. The appointment of the Chair of the Authority as Chair to the Appointments Panel and Salary Review Group in accordance with the Constitution Section 3, Paragraphs 5 and 6 respectively were **agreed**.
- iv. 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 2024/25 was **agreed**.

A5 Review of the Constitution

The Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk which approval for proposed amendments to the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) Constitution.

Resolved:

- i. The contents of the report and the suggested amendments to the Constitution was **noted**.
- ii. The amended Constitution as outlined at Appendix 2 was **approved**.

A6 Representation on Other Bodies 2024/25

The Authority received a report of the Clerk which sought agreement for the appointments process of Members of the Combined Fire Authority to the Other Bodies for 2024/25.

The Clerk highlighted an error within the table under paragraph 6 of the report. The Appointment of Representatives to the Local Government Association should read Cllr J Shuttleworth and not Cllr R Bell.

Resolved:

- i. The criteria for appointment to other bodies to be based on political proportionality be removed as **agreed**.
- ii. The appointments as set out in the table at paragraph 6 were **agreed**.
- iii. The Clerk, in consultation with the appropriate Group Leader(s), to make appointments to the Other Bodies which the Authority are invited to nominate was **authorised**.
- iv. The Clerk, in consultation with the Group Leader(s), to make any changes to membership of the Other Bodies that may arise during 2024/25 was **authorised**.

A7 Members Allowances 2024/25

The Authority received a report advising on the outcome of the Service review of the Members Allowance Scheme for the forthcoming year, 2024/25.

Resolved:

- i. The Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25 was **approved**.
- ii. The proposal to undertake a fundamental review of the Members' Allowances Scheme in 2024 was **approved**.

A8 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

A9 Current Correspondence

The Authority received an update from the Director of Community Risk Management 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).

A10 Notes of the Performance Committee held on 7 March 2024

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Performance Committee which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Committee held on the 7th March 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members **noted** the content of the report.

A11 Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 10 April 2024

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Committee held on the 10 April 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members **noted** the content of the report.

A12 Notes of the Human Resources held on 23 May 2024

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Committee held on the 23 May 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members **noted** the content of the report.

A13 Member Buddy System and Affiliation with Fire Stations

The Authority were presented with a report 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 were **approved**.

A14 Community Risk Management Plan 2024 Consultation Results

The Authority received a report from the Chief Fire Officer which provided Members with information regarding the results of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Consultation which began on 16 February 2024 and ended on 10 May 2024.

Cllr L Hovvells acknowledged the improved response rate this year and advocated that we need to build on this, encouraging people to fill in the consultation.

Cllr C Marshall thanked staff for their work on this year's consultation exercise, building on lessons learnt from previous years. It has been well received and the quality of feedback received has much improved.

Cllr G Lee stated that it would be interesting to pick up comments from residents that live in more rural areas, perhaps via the Parish Councils to gauge the difference in views between rural parts of County Durham and Darlington and the common consensus.

Cllr L Hovvells suggested that it would be useful to capture the location of members of the community completing the consultation survey, and asked if this might be considered in the future.

Resolved:

- i. The contents of the report were **noted**.
- ii. The survey results as part of the decision-making process when assessing Service resources going forward were **considered**.
- iii. The CRMP for 2024-2027 as outlined in Appendix B was **approved**.

A15 Local Government Association (LGA) Subscription

Members were presented with a report providing details of the LGA subscription for 2024/25 and to seek a decision about continued membership.

Resolved:

- i. Members **agreed** the LGA subscription for 2024/25.

A16 HMICFRS State of Fire 2023 Report

The Authority were provided with a reporting summarising the key headlines from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) State of Fire Annual Report 2023.

Cllr G Lee enquired about the level of response from females and ethnic minority groups to joining the service. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer noted that the response rate was very low but further positive action work is being carried out to help engage with females and ethnic minority groups. Positive action work is also taking place internally to help increase and promote aspirations of low represented groups.

Members **noted** the content of the report.

A17 Any Other Business

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

The Chair confirmed that there was no other business.

A18 Exclusion to the Public

Resolved:

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 2 and 4 of Part 1 of the schedule 12A of the said Act.

PART B

B19 Strategic Planning Day May 2024

Members were presented with a report by the Chief Fire Officer summarising the areas explored, debated, and agreed at the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) strategic planning day on Friday 24 May 2024.

Members **noted** the outcomes of the CFA Strategic Planning Day held on 24 May 2024

B20 Service Headquarters Future Options Appraisal

The Authority were presented with a report by the Director of Corporate Resources seeking approval for a replacement for Service headquarters (HQ), following the termination of the current lease for the building in Belmont in August 2027.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

B21 Update on Pay Awards

Members were presented with a report outlining the latest position in relation to the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) pay claim and updates members on the green book claim and gold book pay award for 2024.

Resolved:

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

B22 Appointment of Director

The Authority were presented with a report seeking to advise the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) of the appointment to the position of Director of Community Risk Management.

Members **noted** the report.

B23 Fire Fatality

The Authority received a presentation from the Director of Community Risk Management regarding a recent fire fatality in Castle Eden.

Members discussed and noted the presentation.

B24 Fire Fatality

The Authority received a presentation from the Director of Community Risk Management regarding a recent fire fatality in Darlington.

Members discussed and noted the presentation.

CLOSE OF MEETING