

At a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Belmont Business Park on, on **Tuesday 13 February 2018** at 10.00 am.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors B Avery, A Batey, D Bell, J Bell, P Howell, A Laing, J Lethbridge (substitute for C Carr), L Marshall, H Nicholson, C Potts, G Richardson, J Robinson, J Shuttleworth, F Tinsley, D Stoker and J Turnbull.

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors B Dixon, G Lee, S Richmond and H Scott (substitute for B Jones).

Independent Standards Members:

Apologies for absence were received from J Dykes.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Brookes, C Carr, A Gardner, K Hawley, D Hicks, M McGaun and B Jones.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record (for copy see file of minutes).

A3 Current Correspondence

The Authority received an update from the 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 Budget 2018/19 report under Section 25 of Local Government Act 2003

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer which provided information on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves, so that members have authoritative advice available when making the budget decisions (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That members have regard to this report when approving the budget and the level of council tax for 2018/19.

A5 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Council Tax, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Authority considered a report of the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer which set out the revised revenue budget for 2017/18 and proposals for the 2018/19 budget and medium term financial plan, the capital budgets for 2018/19 to 2021/22 and the Authority's council tax requirement (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer took the Authority through each section of the report providing an outline of the key information and proposals. Members acknowledged the professional opinion detailed in the report and requested that thanks be conveyed to Tony Hope.

Members discussed the level of council tax for 2018/19. Councillor A Batey proposed an increase of 2.95% and this was seconded by Councillor C Potts.

Resolved:

That in accordance with the resolutions in the report:

- i. a revised revenue budget for 2017/18 be approved;
- ii. the revenue budget for 2018/19 be set;
- iii. the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved;
- iv. the capital budgets for 2018/19 to 2021/22 be approved;
- v. the Fire Authority Council Tax Requirement be determined as recommended;
- vi. the associated resolutions be approved.

A6 Review of the Members Code of Conduct

The Authority considered a report of the Clerk which sought approval of a revised Member Code of Conduct (for copy see file of minutes).

The Clerk took the Authority through the report providing an outline of the proposed revisions. It was noted that Appendix 2, paragraph 4.1 stated that the monitoring officer must be notified of gifts and hospitality with a value in excess of £25, however this would be raised to £50.

Members queried whether further revisions would be required with the changes to data protection. The Clerk confirmed that the revised document would comply with data protection legislation.

Resolved:

That the adoption of the revised Code of Conduct for Members be agreed.

A7 HMICFRS Proposed Fire and Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework for England

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager: Assurance and Assets which provided information on the public consultation recently published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on the proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework for 2018/19 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that specific inspection dates were likely to be known in April 2018.

Resolved:

That the Authority's draft response to the consultation be approved.

A8 Consultation on the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Authority considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer which informed Members of the publication of the consultation paper on the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and sought approval for the draft consultation response (for copy see file of minutes).

Members commented on resilience reserves and queried how the figures were decided. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that resilience reserve figures were based on operational and financial best estimates from costs associated with previous experiences of industrial action and any likely national resilience deployments.

Resolved:

- i. That the publication of the consultation on the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England be noted;
- ii. That the draft consultation response attached as Appendix B be agreed.

A9 Arson and Deliberate Fire Reduction

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager: Community Risk Management which provided an update on progress of the Service's Community Safety Strategy in relation to arson and deliberate fire reduction (for copy see file of minutes).

Members commented on the initiatives outlined in the report and requested that thanks be conveyed to all partner agencies.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

A10 Fire and Rescue Authorities: Workforce Statistics Bulletin for England 2016/17

The Authority considered a report of the Area Manager: Workforce Development which provided a summary of the data on the total workforce, leavers and workforce diversity published in the Fire and Rescue Workforce and Pensions Statistics 2017 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members commented on the significance of monitoring the data and possible opportunities around career advice. Councillor S Richmond advised Members that the data was discussed in detail at the Equality and Diversity Working Group meeting.

Resolved:

The contents of the report be noted.

A11 AOB

There was no other business.

A12 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.