

## **Derry City and Strabane District Council**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee (Open) held in the Guildhall, Derry on Tuesday 9 January 2018 at 4.00 pm**

**Present:- Councillor Fleming (Chair); Aldermen Hussey, Kerrigan, Ramsey and Thompson, Councillors Boyle, Cooper, Donnelly, C Kelly, McKeever, McKnight, McMahan, Robinson and Tierney.**

**Non-Members of Committee – Alderman M Hamilton, Councillors Carr, Gallagher and Reilly.**

**In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Mr J Kelpie), Director of Business and Culture (Mr s Gillespie), Director of Health and Community (Mrs K McFarland), Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer (Ms E Cavanagh), Business Support and Change Manager (Mrs R Craig), Lead Finance Officer (Mr A Dallas), Lead Human Resources Officer (Mrs P Donnelly), Lead Legal Services Officer (Mr P Kingston) and Committee Services Assistant (Ms N Meehan).**

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### **GSP1/18 Notice and Summons of Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the Notice and Summons for the Meeting.

### **GSP2/18 Member Attendance and Apologies**

There were no apologies.

### **GSP3/18 Declarations of Members' Interests**

Councillors Fleming and Reilly declared an interest in Item 17 – Update on the North West Strategic Growth Partnership Meeting.

### **GSP4/18 Deputation - To receive Mr M Deeney, Area Commander, NIFRS Western Area Headquarters to address the Committee on the level of cuts in the service in this Council area and the potential risks arising therefrom.**

The Chairperson welcomed Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Mr M Deeney) and Area Commander Western Division (Mr J Tate) Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to the Meeting. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer gave a power-point presentation covering the following areas:

## **Aerial Ladder Platform Crewing Arrangements**

### **Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) Appliance**

- Telescopic boom/platform with extension of 3 metres.
- Integral Water Pipe System feeds remotely controlled firefighting monitor.
- Provide operational capability as a water tower, a rescue platform, a means of entry/egress to taller buildings and assistance with rope rescue.
- Require a minimum crew of 2: one Officer and one Firefighter.

### **ALP Crewing and Location**

#### **NIFRS has 4 ALPs:**

- 3 Crewed Wholetime
- 1 Crewed Retained

#### **Wholetime Primary Crewing of ALPs per Station:**

- 4 Crew Commanders
- 8 Firefighters
- Cost per station £491,591
- Total Cost £1,474,773

### **Flexible Crewing of Specialist Appliances**

- Flexible Crewing is a term used to describe the crewing of lower demand specialist appliances, when required, by using Wholetime personnel who primary crew a conventional pumping appliances within a particular station.
- When the specialist appliance is required, 2 of the crew from the pumping appliance are transferred and deployed on the specialist appliance. The pumping appliance is no longer available.
- Maintains the specialist appliance in its current location with Wholetime crewing.
- If further pumping appliances are required they are brought in from neighbouring stations.

- Flexible Crewing of NIFRS 3 ALPs – releases 36 posts enabling NIFRS to maximise benefit of existing resources.

### **NIFRS Review of Wholetime Crewing for ALPs**

- November 2014 – Flexible Crewing of ALP: Pilot At Knock Station.
- Analysis of 3 year ALP incident data (1 April 2012 – 31 March 2015).
- NIFRS ALP Review (April 2015) recommended the introduction of Flexible Crewing for Wholetime ALPs.
- Public Consultation on Flexible Crewing of ALPs (22 May to 14 August 2015).
- Final Screening Report published 23 October 2015.
- Flexible Crewing of ALPs at Springfield, Knock and Northland Stations introduced 14 December 2015.
- 12 Month Review of ALP Flexible Crewing (1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016). Recommendation for temporary Primary Crewing of Northland’s ALP at night (18:00 to 08:00 hours) effective from 13 February to 1 November 2017.

### **NIFRS Risk Review of High Rise Premises**

(September 2017/Updated October 2017)

#### **Service Wide**

- 311 High Rise Premises identified across Northern Ireland  
154 Domestic  
154 Commercial/Relevant

#### **Western Area**

- 59 High Rise premises in Western Area  
33 Domestic  
26 Commercial/Relevant  
3 Mixed

#### **ALP Mobilisation**

ALPs are mobilised in response to an emergency call as:

- Part of the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA) where NIFRS has identified that the premise/property type is likely to require an ALP

Or

- At the discretion of the Regional Control Centre personnel or request of NIFRS Officers

### **ALP Mobilisations 2012/13 to 2016/17**

### **ALP Demand by Incident Type (2012/13 to 2016/17)**

### **Northland ALP Activity**

From 2012/13 to 2016/17 demand has increased by 28.8%

### **Northland ALP Incident Types (2012/13 to 2016/17)**

### **Northland ALP Mobilisations 2012/13 to 2016/17**

2012/13 to 2016/17 – Northland Aerial mobilised to 14 station areas (including base station area).

### **ALP Response Time – Mobilisation – ALP Average Mobilisation Time**

### **Northland ALP Night Time Primary Crewing Review:**

### **Review Period 1 February 2017 – 31 August 2017 (7 Months)**

- Total mobilisations – 25
- Used at incident – 18 times
- Average mobilisations per annum – 43
- Average use per annum – 31
- Rescue – 1 person from a 2 storey roof

### **Financial Implication of Full Primary Crewing of Northland ALP**

- Average of 43 mobilisations/year

- Average use at 31 incidents/year
- Approximately £11,432/mobilisation and £15,857/mobilisation actually used

### **ALP Crewing Review Summary**

- Specialist appliance
- Low/reducing demand
- Cost Benefit Analysis/Maximise benefit of resources
- Prioritise frontline pumps
- Redeployment of personnel to balance crewing levels elsewhere
- Flexible Crewing has shown no significant impact on ALP response

Members thanked the Assistant Chief Fire Officer for his presentation and then raised the following issues:

- Queried if a Rural Proofing Exercise should have been carried out given that a considerable part of the Western Area was contained in the rural area?
- Referred to the possibility of an East/West divide which seemed apparent from the revised changes.
- Acknowledged the work carried out and the service provided by NIFRS.
- Referred to the need for more consideration to be given to the additional pressures being placed on Fire Service personnel.
- Suggested that an evaluation should have been carried out prior to implementing the changes.
- Expressed concern at the potential impact of the changes on the Western area given its economic situation and the additional risks presented by Altnagelvin Hospital and City of Derry Airport.
- Enquired if the revised arrangements and proposed cuts complied with the position outlined by the Fire Brigades Union.
- Questioned the suggested reduction in risk.
- Expressed concern at the decision to reduce the level of resources due to a suggested decline in the number of major incidents.
- Referred to the number of high risk fires which had occurred at Altnagelvin Hospital during the past number of years.

- Suggested that the line graphs presented indicated that demand was fluctuating rather than decreasing. Guarantees could not be given that demand would not increase the following year and expressed concern that any changes would be introduced based on this information.
- Expressed concern regarding the geographics in terms of the 12 mobilisations in Portadown during 2016/17 and acknowledged concerns regarding the location of one aerial appliance in this area and 3 in the Eastern area.
- Referred to the pressure placed on Fire Service resources by City of Derry Airport.
- Expressed concern at potential difficulties in terms of maintaining staff levels in Strabane and Castlederg.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer responded as follows

- Assured that there was no intention to reduce services in the Western area.
- Advised that the next phase of the plan was to upgrade services in Strabane and Dungannon and to increase provision both in the evenings and at weekends.
- Confirmed that the service to Enniskillen and Omagh had already been upgraded to these models.
- Consideration was being given to the possibility of carrying out a Rural Proofing Exercise.
- Advised that where risk had been identified personnel would engage with those deemed to be at risk or at higher risk in an effort to reduce the risk factor.
- Advised that urban/city centre areas presented the main concern. However the impact of a fire would not affect current capabilities.
- Whilst acknowledging that one major incident could change the entire dynamic referred to the need to strike a balance between cost and risk benefit.
- Advised that NIFRS had carried out a review of all its aerial appliances.
- Confirmed that historical data was considered in terms of demand and type of premises i.e. domestic/commercial/residential which would be fed into the risk process and inform the outcome.

- Confirmed that NIFRS had reviewed the process and were satisfied with the number of aerial appliances which were in situ.
- Acknowledged the delays caused when appliances had to be redirected however fortunately this was not a regular occurrence
- Advised that all information had been evaluated and would be incorporated into the review.
- Reiterated that there was no intention to remove appliances from Northland Station or elsewhere.
- Acknowledged that the map provided indicated that the greatest concentration of aerial appliances was in the East and confirmed that this was where there was the greatest risk.
- Confirmed that aerial appliances were still available on a 24 basis and indications had shown that safety had not been affected.
- Advised that City of Derry Airport employed their own team of Firefighters and NIFRS would not provide a first response to an incident at the Airport. Referred to a Memorandum of Understanding which existed with the Airport to assist them and the reasons for NIFRS to support remained in place and had not been in any way compromised.
- Advised that it was anticipated to enhance the existing 3 Wholetime pumping appliances in the City – 2 at Northland and 1 at Crescent Link.
- Pointed out that if an additional pumping appliance was available at Crescent Link it would be possible to maintain cover.
- Acknowledged the number of fires which had taken place at Altnagelvin Hospital. Whenever attending high rise fires it was policy to attack fires internally and there were procedures in place to deal with this. Aerial appliances would be used to assist and carry out the rescue exercise.
- Advised that any incident at Altnagelvin Hospital had a pre-determined attendance of 3 pumping appliances and 1 aerial appliance. Proposals to introduce an additional appliance would further enhance this provision.
- Pointed out that the statistics were based on a five year period and whilst they did show fluctuations they ultimately reflected a downward trend in serious incidents.
- Assured that cover was not being removed from the City.
- Advised that there would be the potential for support from Fermanagh for Portadown if required. This was a part-time crew which was reflective of risk and demand.

- Referred to the need to evaluate and review the service in accordance with reductions in budget.
- Welcomed the fact that additional monies had been made available in respect of recruitment which allowed the carrying out of a needs based recruitment exercise and maintain human resource levels in Dungannon and Strabane.
- Explained that responses in the City had not been compromised. When attending high rise fires the primary operation was internal. The rescue procedure was to enter and remove persons from the building.
- Advised that NIFRS was currently going through a continuous recruitment process. Castleberg had not been included in the previous recruitment exercise but would be scheduled during the coming year.
- Reiterated that the Castleberg station was currently under consideration in terms of assessing its risk profile and the ability of the Station to respond.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the Area Commander (Western Division) were thanked for their attendance and they withdrew from the

**GSP5/18 Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's business.

**GSP6/18 Confirmation of the Open Minutes of the Governance and Strategic Planning Committee held on Tuesday 28 November 2018**

The Open Minutes of Meeting held on 28 November 2017 (GSP169/17-GSP177/17) were submitted.

Councillor Tierney advised that his attendance was recorded as a non-Member of Committee.

Councillor Reilly advised that although he was in attendance as a non-Member his attendance was not recorded in the Minutes.

It was agreed that the Minutes would be amended accordingly.

It was subsequently agreed that the Open Minutes of Meeting held on 28 November 2017 (GSP169/17-GSP177/17), as amended, be accepted and adopted.



## **Matters Arising**

### **GSP7/18 Closure of Omagh Electoral Office (GSP177/17)**

Alderman Hussey welcomed the fact that the Electoral Board had acquired new premises in Omagh.

### **GSP8/18 Capital Projects Approval - Clooney Greenway - Land Acquisition (GSP176/17)**

The Chief Executive advised that a response had been received from the Department for Communities to a request made by Council for financial assistance towards the development of the above project. The response stated that whilst the Department would wish to be in a position to secure funding unfortunately due to budget limitations they were not in a position to confirm funding in respect of this project at this time. However, they would reconsider budget allocations in 2018/19 and would keep Council updated in terms of budget allocation.

The Chief Executive advised that Council were constantly meeting with representatives from the Department for Communities in an effort to secure funding for this and other Council projects.

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### **GSP9/18 Update on the Development of a Growth Deal for the City Region**

The Head of Finance presented the above report a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on progress towards the development of Growth Deal for the City Region.

The Chief Executive advised that Officers were endeavouring to arrange a Meeting the following week with the Department of Infrastructure, Department of Economy, Department of Finance and Department for Communities to discuss the matter. He also confirmed that he would be contacting the newly appointed Secretary of State for NI in this regard.

The Chief Executive further advised that he would form part of a delegation arranged by Foyle MP, Elisha McCallion to meet with the Secretary of State for Communities, Local Government and Housing in London the following week to explore the potential of investment opportunities for the City.

Councillor Cooper referred to the need to explore all opportunities to advance this project. He referred to the delegation arranged by the Foyle MP referred to above and advised that this would include the University of Ulster and the Chamber of Commerce. He suggested that any other interested bodies wishing to partake in the delegation should contact the constituency officer of Foyle MP, Elisha McCallion. He said it was important to pursue as many different angles as possible in an effort to advance this Deal.

Councillor Reilly welcomed the cross-party support for a Growth Deal which the City was deserving of. He said his Party had long recognised the benefits of a City Deal for the City and district and referred to the efforts of the former Foyle MP, Mark Durkan, who had worked tirelessly in this regard. He said it was unfortunate that those parties who were now pursuing this had not realised its benefits earlier and taken action to avoid many opportunities having been wasted. He referred to the Chancellor's Autumn Statement following which the former Secretary of State had met with Colm Eastwood MLA and had confirmed that he would consider a City Deal for this area. He referred to the need for Council to do all in its power to have this delivered. He stated that a City Deal and its potential could totally transform the current bleak economic situation.

Alderman Hussey referred to the positive engagement which had taken place in this regard. He queried when it was envisaged elected representatives would be represented at future engagements.

Subsequently the Committee

**Recommended that Members endorse the progress made to date in the development of a Growth Deal for the City Region**

**GSP10/18 Rate Support Grant Cuts**

The Lead Finance Officer presented the above report a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. He advised that the purpose of the report was to update Members on recent correspondence in relation to Rates Support Grant and to endorse continued engagement both at Officer and Member level to restore this vital grant to its' original level.

The Lead Finance Officer advised that the Department of Finance had issued a Brief in relation to Northern Ireland budgetary outlook in terms of budget planning. He stated that the Rates Support Grant had been referred to as one avenue for reducing savings. He advised that Council had responded to the Brief through Nilga in clear terms regarding Council's position in relation to cuts in the Rates Support Grant and were working with Nilga to ensure this was the position of each of the Councils involved and a direct response had been forwarded for Derry city and Strabane District Council.

The Chief Executive stated that those elected representatives who were members of Nilga would recall that the Permanent Secretary had attended a Meeting of Nilga held in late November when he gave a presentation on priorities for the Department and particular reference had been made to the Rates Support Grant and mechanisms for review. He stated that Council had indicated the need for Councils to be involved in the review process in order that it understood the terms of reference. In a subsequent letter to the Secretary of State he had referred to the effect any reduction would have on those 7 Councils affected and the potential impact on this Council alone would be in excess of £300,000. He stated that Council had reiterated its opposition to any cuts in the Rates Support Grant.

The Chief Executive continued that a formal response had not yet been received from the Permanent Secretary and had made verbal representations to him particularly as part of the Rates Estimates process for the incoming year.

Councillor Cooper expressed concern at potential further cuts and referred to the impact of the current cuts in the Rates Support Grant.

He referred to the ultimate cost to Council by the Department cutting the Rates Support Grant in terms of leverage from projects. He stated that both the Foyle MP, Elisha McCallion and his Party had made concerted attempts to contact the Permanent Secretary and the Head of the Civil Service to establish what was being proposed. He stated that any further proposed cuts would create greater disparity between the 7 Councils affected by the cuts and the remaining 4 Councils. He stated that this was a senseless act both in financial terms and impact on community. He concluded that his Party would continue to work to ensure these cuts did not come into effect.

Councillor Reilly said it was clear that this was a major issue for the ratepayers of all those Councils affected. He stated that the former Secretary of State had said that this was a consequence of previous NI Executives which was not to address imbalance across Northern Ireland. He criticised the fact that 4 wealthy Councils would not be affected however those worse off Councils were being hit hardest. He referred to the fact that the former Foyle MP, Mark Durkan, had made representations to the Secretary of State and Westminster that such pressures would not have to be faced. He expressed concern at those parties who had neglected their opportunity to influence such an outcome and it was therefore now necessary to contact Ministers from other countries to seek their assistance in preventing these cuts. He said Council must do all in its power to prevent these cuts being introduced and address the regional imbalances which existed.

Councillor Gallagher referred to a promise of additional Rates Support Grant following the introduction of RPA and the subsequent merger of Councils which had now been reneged upon. He stated that the proposed further cuts would prove a double tax on ratepayers. He expressed concern that the approach adopted by Council in previous years had been ignored and suggested that Derry City and Strabane District Council now adopt an independent stance declaring that it would not accept these cuts and suggesting that as one of the Councils suffering greatest deprivation it be considered for additional Rates Support Grant.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **that Members note the recent correspondence in relation to rates Support grant and endorse continued engagement both at Officer and Member level to**

**restore this vital grant to its' original level of 18.3m.**

**GSP11/18 Revised Pay Scales**

The Lead Human Resources Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval for revised Pay Scales which have been agreed with the Trade Unions for Council employees.

The Committee

**Recommended that Members adopt the pay scales as outlined in Appendix 1.**

**GSP12/18 Motion on Naming of Brandywell Stadium and Other Council Assets**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek Elected Member approval for the establishment of and nominations to a dedicated Cross Party Elected Member Working group to take forward the implementation of the Motion set out in Paragraph 2.1 of the report.

The Committee

**Recommended that: (i) a dedicated working group is established to take forward the implementation of the motion set or in paragraph 2.1 of the report. (ii) that Alderman Hussey, Councillors, Carr, Logue and Reilly be nominated to serve on the Working Group.**

**GSP13/18 Performance Improvement Duty - Audit and Assessment Report for 2017-18**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the above report was to advise of and seek elected Member endorsement of the outcome of

the Improvement Audit and Assessment for 2017/18, carried out by the Local Government Auditor.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **that Members endorse the outcome of the Improvement Audit and Assessment for 2017/18, carried out by the Local Government Author.**

**GSP14/18      Nomination to NILGA's Regional Elected Member Development Working Group**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to seek endorsement of the nomination from the Council's Elected Member Development Group for a Member to sit on the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) Regional Elected Member Development Working Group.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **that Members approve Councillor C Kelly as the Council's representative on NILGA's Regional Elected Member Development Working Group.**

**GSP15/18      National Association of Councillors Environment Conference**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to consider Member attendance at the national Association of Councillors Environment Conference.

The Committee

**Recommended**      **that no Members be nominated to attend this conference.**

**GSP16/18      Risk Assessment on the Role of a Councillor**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to communicate and seek endorsement of the Risk Assessment on the role of a Councillor and to seek Member support in complying with the associated additional control measures identified.

In response to a query from Councillor McMahon the Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer confirmed that it would be possible to arrange an afternoon session for those Members who were unable to attend the morning session. This would be additional to the morning Workshop.

The Committee

**Recommended that Members endorse the Risk Assessment completed on the role of a Councillor including providing their support in complying with the associated additional control measures identified.**

### **Open for Information**

#### **GSP17/18 Emergency Planning - Future Emergency Planning Group Model**

The Lead Finance officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to update Member's on the revised model for Sub-regional contingencies in Northern Ireland and the associated transition arrangements and timescales.

In response to a query from Alderman Hussey, the Chief Executive confirmed that the new arrangements would take effect from 15 January 2018. He advised that the current Chairperson of the Northern EPG was the Chief Executive of Causeway Coast and Glens Council and he would be operating in a deputy role.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

#### **GSP18/18 Update on the North West Strategic Growth Partnership Meeting**

The Chief Executive presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. He advised that the purpose of

the report was to provide Members with as update in the meeting of the North West Strategic growth Partnership held on Thursday 14 December 2017.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

**GSP19/18 Registration with the Information Commissioner Office**

The Lead Democratic Services and Improvement Officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. She advised that the purpose of the report was to advise members of data protection registration requirements under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

**GSP20/18 Ombudsman (NI) Act 2016**

The Lead Legal Services officer presented the above report, a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members. He advised that the purpose of the report was to advise members of correspondence received from the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman in relation to new powers under the Ombudsman (NI) Act 2016 (the 2016 Act).

The Committee noted the content of the report.

**The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified**