

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION SUB-COMMITTEE

24 MARCH 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Jimmy Mahon (Chair) Councillors Linda Maloney,
Roy Gladden and Dave Hanratty

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Les Byrom
and Cllr Tony Robertson

1. Preliminary Matters

Members considered the identification of declarations of interest, any urgent additional items, and any business that may require the exclusion of the press and public.

Resolved that:

- a) no declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) no additional items of business to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; and
- c) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Previous Meeting, held on 2nd December 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the committee chair.

3. Industrial Relations Update

(CFO/023/15)

Members considered report CFO/023/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning an update to Industrial Relations and matters of consultation and negotiation between Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and representative bodies.

Members were provided with an overview of the report which highlighted the following areas of progress:

- Consultation on 59 new or amended Service Instructions has been completed successfully, with 10 still remaining in the formal process.
- A review of the 12/12 duty system implemented in January 2014 was scheduled to take place a year later. This review has been postponed in light of the developments around the implementation of 24hr shifts.
- Following constructive dialogue around 24hr working and wholetime retained cover, the Authority is now in position to implement a system of 24hr self-rostered shifts with participating Firefighters providing wholetime retained cover on 8 days over an 8 week period. Whilst it was the intention to provide this system of working on 8 stations (4 station pairs providing for 4 appliances on wholetime retained), expressions of interest in the Liverpool pairing were too low to progress at this stage. Therefore the 24hr shift system will be implemented on 6 stations across 3 station pairs in Wirral, St Helens and Knowsley.
- The Executive Committee of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), on 26th February 2015, has amended the action short of strike in relation to the National dispute on Firefighter Pensions so that it no longer includes a ban on overtime working. This means that the ban on Additional Voluntary Hours (AVH) has been lifted and subsequently there are more options available to the Authority, representative bodies and staff to pursue. As such there is on-going constructive dialogue with the FBU and the Fire Officer's Association (FOA) exploring how best to utilise AVH in maintaining appliance availability.

The Chair invited trade union representatives to comment.

The FBU highlighted the massive amount of work that has gone into agreeing the Service Instructions, which will be the subject of a forthcoming Learning Lunch. They commented on the significant changes to the Service as a result of the cuts to local government grants. The FBU emphasised the importance of staff having a choice in relation to insufficient take-up of the 24hr shifts in Liverpool. They confirmed that there was positive dialogue ongoing surrounding AVH and they were looking at a range of proposals to maintain appliance availability.

Members of the committee congratulated everyone involved in the recent consultations and negotiations, highlighting how achieving wholetime retained is part of the vision of the Authority going forward. Members further applauded Trade Unions and Officers for making the choice to put people first, in particular the courage needed to negotiate through difficult issues rather than standing still or walking away.

The Committee placed on record it's thanks to all involved: Representative bodies, officers and staff; and the commitment to protecting the frontline, including prevention and protection, and all the Service.

Resolved that:

1. The progress being made to;

- a. maintain effective and constructive industrial relations with Representative Bodies be noted, and;
- b. deliver the Authority's IRMP be noted.

Close

Signed: _____

Date: _____