

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

15 DECEMBER 2016

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair) Councillors Joe De'Asha, Barbara Murray, Lesley Rennie, James Roberts, Jean Stapleton and Sharon Sullivan

Also Present: Peter Brennan, Dave Hanratty, Linda Maloney and Chris Meaden

Apologies of absence were received from:
Veronica McNeill

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) The following items required the exclusion of the press and public, due to the possible disclosure of EXEMPT information:
 - **Agenda Item 10 – “Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) Renewal 2017”**
Although the report does not contain EXEMPT information, the verbal update provided in support of this item did contain EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and therefore required the exclusion of press and public during consideration thereof.
 - **Agenda Item 11 – “Proposed Prescott Fire Station – Update”**
This report contained EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 28th July 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Annual Audit Letter - 2015-16

Members considered the Annual Audit Letter 2015/16 produced by the Authority's External Auditors – Grant Thornton, which summarises the key findings arising from the work carried out during 2015/16.

The Treasurer provided an overview of the report, confirming that Grant Thornton gave an unqualified opinion of the Authority's financial statements; and have certified MFRA's accounts.

Members resolved that:

The content of the report be noted.

4. FINANCIAL REVIEW 2016/17 - APRIL TO SEPTEMBER

Members considered Report CFO/086/16 of the Treasurer, concerning a review of the financial position, revenue and capital, for the Authority for 2016/17. The Authority receives regular comprehensive financial reviews during the year which provide a full health check on the Authority's finances. This report covers the first six months of the year (April to September 2016).

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the revenue budget movements and confirmed that the Authority is on track to achieve the required budget savings.

Members were informed of a small underspend identified, which it is recommended be used to increase the Firefighter recruitment reserve.

Amendments to the capital programme were highlighted, along with treasury management activities.

Members were advised that there had been no new long term borrowing during the period; and the internal audit plan remains on track.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The potential £0.550m favourable revenue position identified within the report, be noted.
- b) Utilisation of the £0.550m favourable revenue position to increase the Firefighter recruitment reserve, in light of the expected Firefighter

retirement profile and need to recruit trainees before the establishment falls below the approved staffing level, be approved.

- c) The Treasurer be instructed to continue to work with budget managers to maximise savings in 2016/17.

5. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2015-16

Members considered Report CFO/084/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning publication of the Authority's Statement of Assurance 2015/16 on the Authority website.

Members were informed that the Authority are required to provide assurance to Government on their operational, finance and governance arrangements, which is discharged through the annual Statement of Assurance.

Members were advised that the foreword to the document sets out the financial context within which the Authority is operating, to act as a sense check to readers.

Members Resolved that:

The Authority's draft Statement of Assurance 2015-16, be approved for publication on the Authority website.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2013-17 YEAR 4 ACTIONS 6 MONTH UPDATE

Members considered Report CFO/083/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning an update on the agreed Equality and Diversity actions for Year 4 (2016/17) together with an update on progress against actions for Quarter 1 and 2; and an update on the progress against the Equality Objectives for 2016/17 as at Quarter 2.

Members commented on the inclusivity of the Prince's Trust programme; and conveyed their thanks to staff for the report.

Members Resolved that:

The content of the Equality and Diversity Progress report and Equality Objectives, be noted.

7. MFRA Partnership with LFC Foundation

Members considered Report CFO/082/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning continuation of the partnership between MFRA and the LFC Foundation.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which provided background information to the partnership, which has seen the LFC Foundation “Kicks” Programme delivered in two locations across Merseyside – at the Toxteth Fire Fit Hub and in Birkenhead.

Members were informed that the LFC Foundation requested support from MFRA for a new bid to the Premier League and to formalise partnership arrangements to continue the delivery of the programme for a further three years – initially at three locations, moving to five during the lifetime of the programme. Delivery will continue in Toxteth and Birkenhead, with a third programme delivered at Belle Vale, followed by programmes at Croxteth and St. Helens.

Members were advised that it has been agreed by the LFC Foundation that the Group Manager for Community Risk Management be co-opted onto the Operational Board.

The LFC Foundation have secured £80k to deliver the programme over the next three years. They also applied for a discretionary fund of £30k subject to match funding by MFRA. Therefore, the total budget for the programme will be £140k, with MFRA’s contribution being £30k, which will be met from the Olympic Legacy Reserve.

Martin Tolbert – Head of Operational Delivery for the LFC Foundation was in attendance; and was invited to say a few words.

Members commented that the Foundation are very well thought of within the community; and they are happy for the Authority to be involved with the programme.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The content of the report be noted.
- b) The partnership with the LFC Foundation be approved.

8. Outcome of a 1st Tier Tribunal Hearing: Freedom of Information and Costs

Members considered Report CFO/085/16 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the outcome of a recent Hearing in the 1st Tier Tribunal.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the background to the Hearing.

They were informed that the information requested was originally refused, however it was later found to have been published in a later Financial update.

The information was therefore provided along with an apology, however unfortunately, the matter still proceeded to Tribunal. As a result, Officers applied for; and were awarded costs of £500.

Members were informed that it is unusual to be awarded costs at Tribunal, however as can be seen in the attached appendix, there was concerns expressed regarding the use of public money.

Members Resolved that:

The outcome of a recent Hearing in the 1st Tier Tribunal, be noted.

9. Provision of B type pumping appliances

Members considered Report CFO/089/16 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the procurement of four replacement fire appliances with an option to purchase a further six appliances. This approach is consistent with our current assets refresh strategy.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the procurement process undertaken and the type of vehicles being procured.

Members Resolved that:

The award of contract for B Type pumping appliances to W.H. Bence, be approved.

10. Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) renewal 2017

Members considered Report CFO/088/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the renewal of the Authority's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.

Members were provided with an overview of the report; and a verbal update on the outcomes of the procurement process.

They were informed of the rationale for early renewal of the Authority's Microsoft Enterprise Agreement; and for recommending that the contract be awarded to "Trustmark".

Members Resolved that:

- a) Renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) for a three year contract term, taking advantage of Early Commit pricing, be approved.
- b) The increase in the capital programme of £123k, be approved.
- c) The discount of circa £105k over the life of the contract, delivered through the "Early Commit" with Microsoft, be noted.
- d) The award of contract to "Trustmark" be approved.

11. Proposed Prescot Fire Station – Update

Members considered Report CFO/087/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the developments and progress made at the site of the proposed Fire & Rescue and Police Station Prescot. The report covers a period of 6 months.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the background to the merger proposal and developments to date.

Members were informed of several issues encountered with the proposed site; and the subsequent requirement to increase the drawdown from the Capital Investment Reserve.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The content of the report be noted.
- b) The increase in drawdown from the Capital Investment Reserve by £145,000 to the amount approved in report CFO/028/16, be approved.

12. Information

Cllr Peter Brennan – Lead Member for Community Risk Management and Ambassador for Youth Engagement, thanked all Members who attended Princes Trust presentation events throughout the year, to support the young people. He also paid tribute to staff who are involved in delivery of the programme, who help those young people achieve all that they do.

Members were reminded on the Carol Concert taking place that evening and were encouraged to attend.

Members also requested that a message be added to “Message of the Day”, to wish all staff a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, on behalf of the Authority.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 23 March 2017

Signed: _____

Date: _____