

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

28 MAY 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Dave Hanratty (Chair) Councillors Les Byrom, Linda Maloney, Robbie Ayres, Peter Brennan, Roy Gladden, Ray Halpin, Barbara Murray, Steve Niblock, Lesley Rennie, Denise Roberts, James Roberts, Jean Stapleton and Sharon Sullivan

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Ted Grannell, Cllr John Kelly and Cllr Jimmy Mahon

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENT

Before the start of the meeting, the Chair of the Authority welcomed Glynis Lomax, who was in attendance at the invitation of the Authority.

The Chair on behalf of the Authority conveyed thanks and appreciation to Glynis for her dedicated service, which commenced in 1973. Before her recent retirement, Glynis was the Group Manager with responsibility for Fire Control; and had been awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal in the 2013 Honours List.

The Authority conveyed their best wishes to Glynis for a long and happy retirement and presented her with a small gift as a token of their appreciation.

The Chair then opened the meeting

1. Preliminary Matters

The Authority considered the identification of any declarations of interest, matters of urgency or items that would require the exclusion of the press and public due to the disclosure of exempt information.

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 were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency; and
- c) the following item contained exempt information:

- Agenda Item 2 – Part 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting 26th February 2015.

However, as the Authority confirmed that there was no requirement to discuss these Minutes; members of the press and public were not required to leave during consideration of the item.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Part 1 of the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on **26th February 2015**, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

Part 2 – EXEMPT Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on **26th February 2015**, were also approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Lead Member Feedback 2014/15

Members considered Report CFO/041/15 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning feedback of work undertaken by the appointed Lead Members during 2014/15.

Each Member presented their feedback to the Authority, in turn.

(a) Lead Member for Strategy and Performance

Councillor Barbara Murray provided the Authority with an overview of her involvement in the Lead Member Role for Strategy & Performance, for 2014/15.

The presentation highlighted the number of meetings attended with relevant officers; and an overview of the Department, which encompassed:

- An overview of the roles and responsibilities of the team
- Strategic Planning
- Performance Management
- Community Engagement/ Consultation
- Equality and Diversity and Staff Survey/ Staff Engagement
- Corporate Risk Management

Cllr Murray emphasised some of the key areas she had scrutinised during these meetings, such as:

- The presentation of information within the Service Delivery Plan and some key areas of performance in relation to sickness, RTC's and AFA's.
- Annual After the Incident Survey Reports.
- Equality and Diversity Action Plan and particularly work in relation to enforcements and prosecutions and positive action for firefighter recruitment.
- Outcome of the staff survey – how Members can improve their engagement with staff and the commitments being developed to improve staff engagement.
- Impact of cuts on prevention work and the use of customer insight to focus on the most vulnerable.
- Implementation of the new Planning, Intelligence and Performance System (PIPS).

Cllr Murray also informed Members of the Diversity Action Group (DAG) meetings she has attended throughout the year.

The presentation was concluded with Cllr Murray stating what she has enjoyed most about the role; and what areas she would like to focus on for 2015/16, should she be re-appointed to the role.

The Authority thanked Cllr Murray for the presentation and her feedback.

(b) Lead Member for People and Organisation

Councillor Sharon Sullivan provided the Authority with an overview of her involvement in the Lead Member Role for People and Organisational Development for 2014/15.

A briefing note was circulated to Members containing an overview of the areas considered throughout the year, which were as follows:

Recruitment:

- Commencement of a recruit course with 16 new recruits.
- Recruitment of Apprentices in Protection, Catering and Finance Departments and possibilities for further apprenticeship opportunities across the service.

Organisational Development:

- Appraisal system and improvements made in the identification and delivery of training.
- Positive Feedback received from Management Courses.

Occupational Health:

- Introduction of the new Capability Policy which gives the highest priority to employee health and wellbeing, whilst supporting people to remain in work.

Organisational Change:

- Revised staffing structures, with options designed to be flexibly delivered dependent upon the scale of future cuts.
- Revised work practices and improved efficiency identified to plan for further challenges.
- Supporting staff through Voluntary Severance and outplacement support to avoid Compulsory Redundancy.

Industrial Relations:

- Open and transparent joint working with Trade Unions, which has led to the successful implementation of major changes, without recourse to Industrial Action.

Cllr Sullivan also outlined some of the questions she had raised during the meetings, on issues such as Union Learn, low morale amongst staff working on Stations, management practices, self-rostering and uniforms for non-operational frontline staff.

Cllr Sullivan stated that moving forward, there was further work to be done around engaging with staff to ensure that they feel valued and listened to.

Members thanked Cllr Sullivan for her presentation.

(c) Lead Member for Prevention and Protection

Councillor Roy Gladden provided the Authority with an overview of his involvement in the Lead Member Role for Prevention and Protection for 2014/15.

A briefing note was provided and circulated by Cllr Gladden highlighting the meetings attended and the key areas discussed.

Cllr Gladden explained that throughout the year, he had met not only with designated Support Officers, but also with members of staff from the various teams within the Directorate.

He spoke to the Briefing Note and highlighted some key areas covered, which were as follows:

- External funding for some prevention activities, particularly in relation to youth engagement; and the value of continuing to provide such activities in the future.
- The role and responsibilities of the Protection Department.
- Home Safety Strategy and the importance of sharing data with other agencies/ partners to identify those who are most vulnerable and target resources appropriately.
- Challenges around RTC reduction and issues around governance – with no Pan-Merseyside approach.
- Work of the Incident Investigation Team (IIT) and the impact that their work can have on Police Investigations and Coroners Reports.
- The role of ASB and Arson Advocates working closely with Partners, particularly around the Bonfire Period.
- The introduction of more flexible working contracts for all Advocates.
- The Role of the Community Safety Admin Team in supporting all functions across the Department.

Cllr Gladden suggested that the issue around RTC governance, could be an action for the Authority moving forward, to try to work closely with all relevant partners and organisations to develop a Pan-Merseyside approach to reducing RTC's.

Cllr Gladden concluded his presentation by thanking all the Officers who gave up their time to meet with him over the course of the year.

Members thanked Cllr Gladden for his feedback.

(d) Lead Member for Operational Response

Councillor Robbie Ayres provided the Authority with a presentation, containing an overview of his involvement in the Lead Member Role for Operational Response for 2014/15.

The presentation highlighted the number of meetings Cllr Ayres had had throughout the year; and some of the key issues discussed during those meetings, which were as follows:

- Sickness absence and impact on appliance availability
- Safe systems of work
- Response times compared to other Fire & Rescue Authorities
- Scrutiny of performance against main Local Performance Indicators
- Role of the Health and Safety Team in investigating incidents and identifying improvements to working practices.
- Introduction of Safe Person Assessments
- Collation of Risk Information for properties
- Shift changes and possible introduction of 24 hour working alongside retained cover at some premises.
- Industrial Action and relationship with the Representative Bodies.

The presentation highlighted reports considered by the Authority's Performance & Scrutiny Committee, for which Cllr Ayres had a level of involvement; and meetings of the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee attended by Cllr Ayres.

In addition, the feedback presentation highlighted some of the key achievements of the Operational Response function during 2014/15, as follows:

- More efficient provision of command support
- Improvements as a result of effective monitoring, audit and review
- Review of the flexi duty system for middle managers
- Implementation of the StARS people management system
- Supported implementation of station mergers and closures work
- Successfully managed resilience staffing arrangements during 48 periods of Industrial Action
- Improved communication with workforce – sharing outcomes of debriefs and operational assurance
- Managed reduced appliance availability following the withdrawal of the Additional Voluntary Hours (AVH) Agreement
- Implemented a revised Low Speed Manoeuvre Protocol, which has seen a 30% reduction in incidents of vehicle damage.

The presentation also highlighted the positive performance against key Performance Indicators, such as Accidental Dwelling Fires confined to room of origin, achievement of the attendance standard, alert to mobile times and RTC's involving Fire Service vehicles.

Finally, Cllr Ayres showed a video clip of a recent fire, which demonstrated the types of incident firefighting staff can respond to.

Members thanked Cllr Ayres for his presentation.

Cllr James Roberts commented that the recent fire shown in the video clip, occurred within his ward and he wished to place on record his thanks to all staff who responded to the incident for their bravery and dedication.

(e) Lead Member for Operational Preparedness

Councillor Lesley Rennie provided the Authority with feedback concerning her involvement in the Lead Member Role for Operational Preparedness for 2014/15.

Cllr Rennie informed Members of the meetings attended throughout the year and the areas covered during those meetings, which were as follows:

- Review of the remit of the role and scrutiny reports required for the Performance & Scrutiny Committee.
- An overview of the Operational Preparedness Directorate and teams

- The Functional Plan for Operational Preparedness and the Departments 3 key deliverables
- Operational Planning – including the management of all emergency plans, traffic management, contingency planning, COMAH, business continuity etc...
- Operational Equipment
- Fire Control (previously MaCC)
- Engineering Centre of Excellence – maintenance of all Authority Vehicles
- Marine Rescue and Hovercraft
- Search & Rescue Team
- Local, National and International Resilience
- Training

Cllr Rennie highlighted the work of the Department in ensuring that the Authority was well prepared for the recent periods of industrial action.

The feedback also covered the Operational Preparedness Departments role in preparing for potential terrorist attacks or other major incidents, such as earthquakes; and planning for major local events, for example the recent “3 Queens” event.

Cllr Rennie also highlighted that this is all taking place against a backdrop of cuts and significant change, however she is confident that the Authority are well prepared and in excellent shape to meet any future challenges.

The feedback from Cllr Rennie also covered the recent firefighter recruitment, highlighting that the new recruits were automatically placed onto contracts incorporating an element of retained cover, which will assist with the availability of appliances.

In addition, Cllr Rennie commented on the opening of new Joint Control Centre, stating her belief that collaborating with the Police was the right decision for the Authority.

Cllr Rennie concluded by stating how much she had enjoyed the role; and her wish for it to continue; and thanking all staff involved in meeting with her for their time and input.

Members thanked Cllr Rennie for her presentation.

(f) Lead Member for Finance, Assets and Efficiencies

Councillor Jean Stapleton provided the Authority with feedback in relation to her involvement in the Lead Member Role for Finance, Assets and Efficiency for 2014/15.

Members were provided with a Briefing Note from Cllr Stapleton covering the items considered in detail throughout the year. This highlighted some of the

major projects undertaken recently, or currently underway; a brief rationale of the need for the changes to be made, and an overview of progress in relation to each project.

Some of the major projects highlighted within the Briefing Note were:

- PFI Project and some lessons learnt.
- Joint Control Centre
- Station Mergers
- Firefit Hub
- ICT Projects

A PowerPoint presentation was also provided in support of the Briefing Note, which showed pictures of some of the new buildings, plans of potential building plots for station mergers and possible designs for those new stations.

Cllr Stapleton commented on her involvement with the Firefit Hub in her capacity of Trustee, stating what a fantastic facility it is, but there will be challenges moving forward with regards to its sustainability.

Cllr Stapleton concluded by stating how fascinating she has found the role and thanking Kieran for all his support.

Members thanked Cllr Stapleton for her presentation.

The Chair of the Authority thanked all Lead Members for their feedback, commenting that the roles have provided Members with an opportunity to gain greater experience, knowledge and understanding of the different Departments, which has and will continue to enable the Authority to make informed decisions.

He commented that some issues have been highlighted through the presentations, which the Authority will need to look at addressing moving forward.

Members resolved that:

- a. the feedback presented by the current Lead Members in relation to their involvement in their respective roles for 2014/15, be noted:
- b. continuation of the current Lead Member Roles for the coming Municipal year, be confirmed; and
- c. appointment to these Lead Member roles for 2015/16, be formally agreed at the Annual General Meeting on 11th June 2015.

4. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2015: Statutory Officer Disciplinary Procedures

Members considered Report CFO/042/15 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning new Regulations in force relating to disciplinary procedures for statutory officers.

The Monitoring Officer provided Members with an overview of the report, explaining that the new Regulations came into force on 11th May; and it has been stipulated that these need to be considered by authorities at their first full meeting following the Local Elections.

The new Regulations require authorities to make changes to their Statutory Officer Disciplinary procedures, resulting in the decision to dismiss being reserved for the full Authority only; and the need for the full Authority to consider the view of an Independent Panel.

Members were informed of a number of inconsistencies within the Regulations, which make it difficult to interpret if the Regulations apply to Fire and Rescue Authorities. The view of the Monitoring Officer was that the Authority should try to comply with the Regulations as a matter of good practice.

The Chair of the Authority raised a number of questions before the Authority put structures in place to comply with these Regulations.

Members resolved that:

- 1 The Regulations would be adopted by the Authority however:
2. A further report be brought back to the Authority providing information as to:
 - a. The expenses proposed to be paid to independent panel members
 - b. Information as to how such an independent panel would be recruited

At the end of business, Cllr Linda Maloney thanked the Chair on behalf of the Authority, for all his work during the Municipal year. She highlighted that although there have been many challenges, there has also been some really good work, with the opening of the new JCC/ Headquarters Building; and becoming the Chair of the North West Fire & Rescue Forum, which has enabled the Authority to build bridges with other Fire & Rescue colleagues.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 11 June 2015

Signed: _____

Date: _____