

# **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**17 DECEMBER 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, Jean Stapleton, Sharon Sullivan, Paul Tweed and Marianne Welsh

**Also Present:**

**Apologies of absence were received from:** Cllr Mike Kearns, Cllr Jimmy Mahon and Cllr James Roberts

### **13. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Prior to the start of the meeting, information regarding general housekeeping was provided by the Chair to all in attendance.

The Chair confirmed to all present that the proceedings of the meeting would be filmed and requested that any members of the public present who objected to being filmed, make themselves known.

No members of the public voiced any objection therefore the meeting was declared open and recording commenced.

### **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) The following declarations of interest were made by Members in relation to Items of business on the agenda:

- Cllr Ayres declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 5, due to being a St. Helens Councillor.
- Cllr Rennie declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 6, due to being a Trustee of Fire Support Network.
- Cllr Stapleton declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 6, due to being a Trustee of Fire Support Network.
- Cllr Hanratty declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 12.

- b) no additional items of business were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency; and
- b) The following items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information:
- **Agenda Item 12** – “ICT Managed Service”, due to containing EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was also noted that Appendix B to Agenda Item 5 – “Proposed Station Merger of Eccleston and St. Helens Fire Stations At a New Station On Canal Street” contained EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and should discussion around this Appendix be required, members of the press and public would need to be excluded before discussion commenced.

## **2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the authority, held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

## **3. Station Mergers - Progress Report**

Members considered report CFO/097/15 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning progress made to date in relation to the Station Mergers Programme.

Members were provided with an overview of the report which provided an update on each of the work streams within the Station Mergers Programme.

In relation to the closure of Allerton Fire Station, Members were informed that discussions are underway with Liverpool City Council and Merseyside Police regarding future use of the fire station, Police station and library which will be reported to Members in due course.

In relation to the merger option in Prescot, Members were informed that a full planning application has now been submitted, which is due to be considered by Knowsley Council’s Planning Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016. If approved, it is envisaged that work on the site will commence in February 2016 with the build expected to take approximately 12 months. Members were also informed of action taken by the Authority’s appointed contractor, to encourage local businesses to bid for inclusion on the list of sub-contractors for this project.

Members were informed of the progress made with regards to the Wirral merger proposal at the Saughall Massie site. Pre-planning advice has been sought by officers; and as a result of the advice received, plans for the new station have been amended, including reducing the footprint of the building. It is envisaged that a full planning application will be submitted shortly. Members were advised

that it is considered highly likely that the matter will be referred to the Secretary of State.

In relation to the St. Helens merger proposal, Members were informed that an agreement had been reached with Pilkington's over the sale of the Canal Street site, subject to planning approval. Discussions with the Police and North West Ambulance Service regarding shared use of the site continue, but no agreement has yet been reached.

Members resolved that

- a) the contents of this report be noted
- b) their thanks be placed on record to all those involved in the Station Mergers process, for all their hard work.

**4. St Helens Consultation Outcomes**

Members considered report CFO/094/15 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the outcomes of the twelve week public consultation regarding the draft proposals to either merge St. Helens and Eccleston fire stations at a new station on Canal Street, St. Helens, or close Eccleston fire station outright and respond from St. Helens.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which detailed the consultation undertaken with various stakeholders over proposals to deliver the savings required for this year, which took the form of public meetings, focus groups, staff meetings and an online questionnaire. The update also highlighted the outcomes of this consultation.

Members were informed that the public consultation meetings were not well attended, however the overall conclusion was that the Canal Street merger proposal was supported.

There were no comments referring to the exempt information so the meeting was not closed to the public at this point

Members resolved that

- a) The outcomes of the comprehensive and informative St Helens public consultation be noted.
- b) Those outcomes be taken into full and carefully considered account when considering report CFO/094/15 relating to the possible future options for fire cover in St. Helens.
- c) Thanks be placed on record to all involved in the consultation process including Officers, Opinion Research Services and Eccleston Councillors.

**5. Proposed Station Merger Of Eccleston And St. Helens Fire Stations At A New Station On Canal Street**

Members considered report CFO/092/15 of the Chief Fire Officer regarding the proposed station merger of Eccleston and St. Helens Fire Stations at a new station on Canal Street.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which outlined the outcomes of the 12 week public consultation.

Members were provided with some reassurance that Officers will do all they can to maintain the wholetime availability appliance at Eccleston fire station, prior to the opening of the new station at Prescott, which when operational, will provide additional coverage to areas of Eccleston.

Discussion took place around the impact of budget cuts and the difficult decisions being faced by the Authority.

**Members resolved that:**

- a) the merger of Eccleston and St Helens fire stations at a new station on Canal Street, subject to the purchase of the land from Pilkington's and the granting of planning permission, be approved;
- b) the change in crewing of the Eccleston fire appliance from wholetime to wholetime retained, be approved, noting that the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) will endeavour to maintain wholetime crewing of the appliance for as long as is practically possible prior to the completion of the new station in Prescott, which would provide some additional coverage into the St Helens district;
- c) the capital programme be amended to incorporate the Canal Street fire station scheme, and;
- d) delegated authority be given to the CFO to continue discussions with partners, including Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service, with a view to sharing the new building.

**6. HOME SAFETY STRATEGY 2015-2018**

Members considered report CFO/090/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning the proposed refresh of the Home Safety Strategy for 2015-18 with particular regard to the targeted approach and referral pathway.

Members were informed that this report had previously been considered by the Performance and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

An overview of the report was provided to Members which detailed the recent increase in fire deaths; and the requirement to target diminishing resources

efficiently by working closely with our partners and sharing data, to identify and target those who are most vulnerable within our communities.

Discussion took place around the continuing role of the Fire Support Network in delivering the Home Safety Strategy; and around issues related to private landlords and houses of multiple occupation in relation to fire safety.

Members thanked Officers and all staff who help to make our communities safer.

Members Resolved that:

- a) the information contained within this report concerning the proposed revised approach to home safety, be noted.
- b) The Home Safety Strategy 2015-2018, be approved for implementation, as recommended by the Performance & Scrutiny Committee.

**7. SAFE Programme**

Members considered report CFO/082/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the new SAFE (Safety Advice Fire Education) juvenile fire setting intervention programme.

Members were provided with an overview of the report and were informed that examples of the information and resources which will be used in the intervention programme were on display for Members to view should they so wish.

Members were informed that the programme will be used to educate young people on the dangers of fire setting; and where required, refer young people onto other agencies for further support and intervention.

Members Resolved that:

The new juvenile fire setting programme, be approved.

**8. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15**

Members considered report CFO/089/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the content of the Annual Health, Safety and Welfare Report and performance of the Authority with regard to the Health, Safety and Welfare outcomes for 2014-15.

Members were informed that this report had been considered the Performance and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted some of the key health, safety and welfare outcomes for 2014/15. They were informed of a slight increase in the number of recorded injuries, with the majority of injuries being muscular strains. However, it was reported that despite this slight increase, the number of duty days lost to sickness has actually reduced significantly.

Members were also informed of the number of near misses reported; and the need to encourage increased reporting of such near misses to enable root causes to be identified and actual incidents to be prevented.

Members resolved that:

- a) the contents of the report be noted.
- b) performance in relation to Health Safety and Welfare across the Authority for the period April 2014 to March 2015, be noted.

**9. Industrial Relations Update**

Members considered report CFO/096/15 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning matters of negotiation and consultation that are currently or have recently been subject to dialogue between Officers of the Authority and Representative Bodies since the final meeting of the Consultation and Negotiation Committee of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015.

Members were informed that following the disbanding of the Consultation & Negotiation Sub-Committee at the Authority's AGM in June 2015, it was agreed that regular update reports be submitted to the full Authority for Members information.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the number of new or amended Service Instructions considered by the joint secretaries, and the Memorandum of Understanding reached with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) over the 24 hour and wholetime retained duty system, which places the Authority in a better position to deal with the financial challenge moving forward.

The overview also highlighted the work undertaken with representative bodies to reach an agreement with regards to co-responding to cardiac arrest incidents.

Members expressed their thanks to the FBU and other representative bodies for their pragmatic approach during such challenging times; commenting that maintaining such positive industrial relations during such challenging times, is a credit to all those involved.

Members resolved that:

- a) The work undertaken and progress made in relation to maintaining effective and constructive industrial relations with Representative Bodies, be noted.

- b) The work undertaken and progress made to deliver the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), be noted.

## **10. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2015**

Members considered report CFO/095/15 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the Authority's Statement of Assurance 2015 for publication on the Authority's website.

Members were informed that the Statement of Assurance looks back on performance for 2014-15, therefore it does not make reference to recent incidents such as the Merseyside USAR team deployment to the incident at Bosley or the response to the recent floods in Cumbria.

Members expressed their thanks to the Chief Fire Officer and Officers involved in assisting with the recent Cumbria floods and other major incidents outside the Authority's boundaries.

### Members resolved that:

- a) The information contained within the report, be noted.
- b) The Authority's draft Statement of Assurance 2015, be approved for publication on the Authority's website.

## **11. Financial Review 2015/16 - April to September**

Members considered report CFO/091/15 of the Treasurer, concerning a review of the financial position, revenue and capital, for the Authority for the period April to September 2015.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted that the Final Accounts for 2014/15, which have been audited and confirmed by Grant Thornton, identified that the Authority were slightly ahead of the savings target. They were also informed of progress in relation to the delivery of approved budget savings for 2015/16.

The overview informed Members of an increase to the Capital Programme, due to the increased cost of the new Prescot Fire Station scheme.

Members were also informed that the Treasury Management strategy remains consistent; and performance in relation to financial processes remains strong.

With regards to internal audit reviews, Members were advised that most reviews are yet to be completed as the majority are scheduled for later in the year.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The potential £0.814m favourable revenue position identified within this report, be noted.
- b) The utilisation of the £0.814m favourable revenue position to increase the capital investment reserve in light of the future station merger programme and Service investment needs, be approved.
- c) the treasurer be instructed to continue to work with budget managers to maximise savings in 2015-16.

Following consideration of this item, Members were informed of indicative figures for the Authority's grant settlement up to 2019-2020. It was stressed to Members that at this stage, the figures had not been formally confirmed.

Initially, the Authority had anticipated as a worst case scenario, a savings target of £14m up to 2019-2020, however, indicative figures showed that the savings target was likely to be in the region of £11m.

Members were informed that although this position looks slightly better than what was anticipated, any further cuts to the Authority's budget will undoubtedly result in some very difficult decisions being made; and further reductions in the number of fire appliances and fire stations.

Members noted that the fire and rescue service are the only emergency service not to be protected from Government cuts; and expressed concerns over the potential for further cuts to have a significant detrimental impact on the safety of Merseyside.

The Representative Bodies were invited to comment.

Mark Rowe representing the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) commented that it was important to retain good industrial relations moving forward, to help the Authority through such challenging times; and stressing that the safety of the public of Merseyside will always be the priority for the FBU.

**12. ICT Managed Service Award (Confidential)**

Members considered report CFO/093/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning the award of a new contract for ICT Managed Services following a full European Union (EU) competitive tender procedure with negotiation.

Members were provided with an overview of the report which detailed the tender process undertaken and the outcomes of an in-house comparison analysis.

Members resolved that:

- a) the award of the contract for the provision of ICT Managed Service provision to Telent Technology Services Ltd. for a period of 5 years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 (with the possibility of extension of the term for a further 5 year period), be approved.
- b) there be no standstill period of 10 days between the date of notification of the above decision to Telent Technology Services Ltd and the date on which the Authority enters into the contract to conclude the agreement, as there is no legal requirement for the Authority to do so.
- c) the contract price savings be noted.
- d) the comparison of in-house provision, in particular that such provision will not provide the most cost effective service, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 26 May 2016

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_