

**MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
AUTHORITY MEETING
27TH SEPTEMBER 2011**

PRESENT: Councillors Tony Newman (Chair), Dave Hanratty, Ted Grannell, Barbara Murray, Eddie Clein, Andrew Blackburn, Ian Lewis, Terry Jones, Leslie Rennie, Steve Niblock, Linda Maloney, Vi Bebb, Robbie Ayres and Jimmy Mahon

ALSO PRESENT: Paul Basnett and Robin Baker - Audit Commission
Ex Chief Fire Officer Tony McGuirk

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillor Colin Strickland

At the start of the meeting, Tony McGuirk, ex Chief Fire Officer was presented with a gift on behalf of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority.

1. Preliminary Matters

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

- (a) Councillors Tony Newman and Dave Hanratty declared a personal interest to Item 5 on the agenda.
- (b) there were no additional items of business which were determined as a matter of urgency.
- (c) Item 8 on the agenda required the exclusion of the press and public due to the disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st July 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Annual Governance Report, MFRA Letter of Representation, MFRA OPINION 10/11.

Robin Baker from the Audit Commission presented the Annual Governance Report in relation to Merseyside Fire & Recue Authority.

Members resolved that:

- (a) the adjustments to the financial statements which are set out in the report be noted.
- (b) the Authority's agreement not to amend the accounts for immaterial uncorrected errors be confirmed.
- (c) the letter of representation provided alongside the report be approved.

4. **Statement of Accounts 2010/11 Authorised for Issue**
(CFO/113/11)

Members considered Report CFO/113/11 of the Deputy Chief Executive concerning the audited 2010/11 Statement of Accounts.

Members resolved that

the audited statement of accounts attached as Appendix A to this report be approved and request they be authorised for issue.

5. **Potential Opportunities for a North West Control Room**
(CFO/117/11)

Members carefully considered report CFO/117/11 of the Deputy Chief Executive and discussed the options available to them in that either MFRA could remain as it is in terms of its Mobilising Command and Control functions, or could enter into a collaborative approach with other FRA's in the North West.

Members also discussed a further option to consider investigating further the possibility of joint Command and Control working with the Police and Ambulance Service. After careful deliberation which in particular recognised

- (1) The significant investment in both purchasing a new system in advance of the (failed) national project and exploiting that system to maximise the use of technology in Merseyside.
- (2) That MFRA would not receive the significant technological benefits that may be afforded to the other authorities in the North West who have older possibly less advanced systems.
- (3) That the financial benefits of a North West collaboration remain relatively small compared to the risks and the efforts involved in delivering the savings compared to the overall level of savings and strategic aims for the Authority in its financial planning.
- (4) The critical role that mobilisation plays within MFRA's emergency response capabilities and in particular the role its local control room staff plays in the delivery of an excellent service for the people of Merseyside – as recently exemplified in response to the civil disorder.

- (5) That there are a number of lessons to be learnt from the excellent joint working to manage the recent incidents in Merseyside working closely with the Police and other agencies and that significant work has already been undertaken within the Merseyside Resilience Forum in relation to the closer integration of Emergency Planning and Command and Control functions.

Councillor Hanratty proposed a draft Resolution which was seconded by Councillor Mahon, Councillor Rennie and Councillor Clein made representation from their Groups in that lessons should be learned from the National Project.

17 Members voted in favour of the proposed resolution moved by Councillor Hanratty.

Members resolved that

- (a) A local solution be progressed as the most potentially cost efficient and operationally effective solution for Merseyside FRA.
- (b) Collaboration with other Authorities in the North West on this project be suspended until the outcome of negotiations with Merseyside Police and North West Ambulance Service are known.
- (c) The Chief Fire Officer be instructed to formally approach the Police Authority and the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to enter into negotiations on behalf of the Fire Authority to develop a proposal for effective joint working around a resilient combined Command and Control function and a report be presented to the next Authority meeting detailing progress with these discussions
- (d) The LACC staff team be formally thanked for the excellent work in bringing forward the information to allow the Authority to consider the project and that colleagues across the North West be offered good wishes for the scheme moving forward.

6. Operational Policy Review
(CFO/114/11)

Members considered Report CFO/114/11 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the Operational Planning, Operational Training and Operational Assurance Policies.

Members resolved that

the changes made to the Operational Planning, Operational Training and Operational Assurance Policies be approved.

7. Consultation Documents Released by CLG
(CFO/116/11)

Members were provided with a short presentation to explain the key issues.

Members considered Report CFO/116/11 of the Deputy Chief Executive concerning a number of consultation papers relating to finance that have been released by CLG.

Members resolved that

- (a) the consultation papers and the matters arising from the presentation be noted.
- (b) powers for finalising responses be delegated to Party Leaders.