

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

22ND JANUARY 2008

PRESENT: **Councillors:**
Tony Newman (Chair)
Cllr Mahon (Vice Chair)
Don Prout
Ted Grannell
John George
Sharon Sullivan
Eddie Clein
Jack Colbert
Jimmy Kendrick
Andrew Blackburn
Steve Niblock
Karen Afford
Jimmy Kendrick
Les Byrom CBE
Betty Lowe MBE
Leslie Rennie
Ken Roughley

Apologies for absence were received from

Councillors: Dave Hanratty and Vera Best

Also present

**Carole Roberts – Independent Member
Robin Baker – Audit Commission
Graham Parry – Audit Commission
Representative – Punchline Company – Trial of
Microphone / PA Recording System**

Prior to the meeting

Bernadette Kenny – ICT introduced and demonstrated a PA recording system with microphone on/off switch facility, which was being trialled following Members' feedback regarding a system trialled at their previous meeting on 13th November.

1. **Preliminary Matters**

The Authority considered and identified that:

- (A) There were no declarations of interest in relation to any item of business on the agenda.
- (B) There were no additional items to the agenda
- (C) The order of the agenda was changed to consider item 17 (CFO/25/08) Allerton & Belle Vale LLAR Consultation Outcomes, prior to item 16 (CFO/15/08) Use of Resources & Direction of Travel Assessments 2007 Therefore Item 17 became 16 (CFO/25/08) and Item 16 became 17 (CFO/15/08)
- (D) Item 17 (CFO/15/08), Use of Resources & Direction of Travel Assessments 2007, required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information. This item contained Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972
- (E) Item 16 (CFO/25/08) Members agreed to lift the Exempt status from this report regarding Allerton & Belle Vale LLAR Consultation Outcomes, except in respect of Appendix A, and to deal with the item as an open item without the exclusion of the press or public.
At the request of the Fire Brigades Union the Authority agreed to treat Appendix A (Memorandum of Understanding between MF&RA and the FBU) as a confidential document, though it was recognised that the content could be published in the public domain in the future to clarify any disputes as to the interpretation of the document should they arise, The Authority accordingly agreed to treat the document as confidential for the time being.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Members considered the minutes of the previous meeting on 13th December. It was noted that Councillor Kendrick had been in attendance at the meeting.

Resolved that:

With the inclusion of Councillor Kendrick being named as Present, the proceedings of the last meeting of the Authority held on 13th December, 2007, were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair of the Authority.

**3. Private Finance Initiative – Progress Report for the Period November to December 2007 (Standing Item)
(CFO/1/08)**

Members considered Report CFO/1/08 of the Chief Fire Officer regarding the progress of the North West Fire Services PFI Project for the period November – December 2007 and looked forward to receiving further reports, including those relating to key milestones in the forthcoming months.

Resolved that:

The Authority:

- (i) noted the report,
- (ii) requested that Minutes of the Project Board meetings, as identified in paragraph 5 of the report, be distributed to Members for their information,
- (iii) requested that the Gateway reporting system be issued to Members to enable them to keep track of progress.

**4. Review of Elected Member Champions – Follow up Report
(CFO/2/08)**

Members considered Report CFO/2/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning proposals to amend the existing Member Champion Roles, including the proposed addition of a European Champion.

Resolved that:

The Authority:

- (i) agreed the proposals as set out in paragraph 8 – 10 and accompanying table to the report.
- (ii) agreed to the addition of a European Champion, including the position of the Brussels Lead Representative (previously a vacant position) being absorbed into that role.
- (iii) appointed Councillor Niblock as the European Champion.

**5. FPOS (First Person on Scene) Designation for Operational Personnel
(CFO/3/08)**

Members consider Report CFO/3/08 of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer concerning First Person On Scene (FPOS) identification for operational personnel.

Resolved that:

The Authority:

- (i) approved the recommendation of helmet identification markings for the appropriately qualified personnel.
- (ii) Instructed the Chief Fire Officer to examine all options regarding the addition of wording, the positioning and the number of identification labels required, to provide the greatest visibility for identification of the First Person On Scene (FPOS) for operational personnel.

6. Service Plan Item 7.2.15 (2007) Charging for Gaining Access to Vehicles
(CFO/4/08)

Members considered Report CFO/4/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning charges for gaining access to vehicles and sought approval of the recommendations.

Resolved that:

The Authority noted:

- (i) the contents of the report and supported the conclusion of the service plan item, and
- (ii) noted the findings of the analysis of statistics and agreed that due to the nature, and extremely small number of calls received, the policy of not to charge for this type of call continues.

7. Combined Pump Platform Update
(CFO/5/08)

Members considered Report CFO/5/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the progress and expected delivery date of the Combined Pump Platform.

Resolved that:

The Authority noted the contents of the report and agreed that a further report be brought to the Authority in March, 2008.

8. Level 4 Water Training for all Personnel
(CFO/13/07)

Members considered Report CFO/13/08 of the Chief Fire Officer to expand Level 4 Still Water Rescue Training from the current 14 Community Fire Stations to all Operational Personnel and Fire Stations across Merseyside.

Resolved that:

The Authority approved the expansion of Level 4 Still Water Rescue Training to all Operational Personnel at all Community Fire Stations across Merseyside.

9. Equality Act 2006

(CFO/9/08)

Members of the Authority considered and noted Report CFO/9/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the provisions of the Equality Act 2006.

10. Equality & Diversity Policy

(CFO/20/08)

Members considered Report CFO/20/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the proposed Equality and Diversity Policy for MF&RS.

Resolved that:

The Authority:

- (i) approved the Equality & Diversity policy, to replace the Equality & Fairness at Work Policy (ADM 0086) and the new policy be referred to as ADM 0086; and
- (ii) noted and approved the new format which has been designed to improve the management of information within the organisation.
- (iii) requested a review of the Diversity Group to include Member involvement.

11. Communities and Local Government/Audit Commission Consultation Responses

(CFO/8/08)

Members considered Report CFO/8/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the Authority's responses to a number of consultation documents published by Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Audit Commission and other inspecting bodies in late 2007

Resolved that:

The Authority approved the consultation responses attached to CFO/8/08 for submission to the originating organisation by their respective deadlines.

12. Centre of Excellence for Fire Service in England

(CFO/29/08)

Members considered Report CFO/29/08 of the Chief Fire Officer summarising Fire Service Circular and Consultation Paper 45/2007 – A Centre of Excellence for the Fire & Rescue Service in England, and proposed a response.

Resolved that:

The Authority noted and approved that the response be submitted in line with the timetable.

13. Audit Commission Consultation Paper – Proposed Work Programme & Scales of Fees 2008/09 & Indicative Fee Proposals for 2010/11
(CFO/18/08)

Members considered Report CFO/18/08 of the Executive Director of Resources, concerning proposals for Audit Commission fees and to propose a response to Audit Commission Consultation Paper.

Resolved that:

The Authority noted the report and approved the proposed response.

14. Staff Welfare
(CFO/21/08)

Members considered Report (CFO/21/08) of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning recent actions taken in respect of the safety and welfare of Firefighters and their families at Toxteth.

Resolved that:

Following a vote, the Authority:

- (i) noted the Authority's policies with regard to health and safety and events on fire stations
- (ii) commended the actions of the Station Locality Manager (SLM) who dealt with a sensitive matter in a sensible, practical and wholly appropriate manner
- (iii) expressed deep concern at the statements made by the FBU officials and requested that the statement be formally retracted

15. LLAR (Low Levels of Activity & Risk) Recruitment
(CFO/28/08)

Members considered Report CFO/28/08 of the Chief Fire Officer seeking approval to begin recruitment for LLAR (Low Level of Activity & Risk) Contracts of Employment.

Resolved that:

Following a vote the Authority gave approval to the Service to commence recruitment of personnel to the LLAR duty system with immediate effect.

16. Allerton & Belle Vale LLAR Consultation Outcomes
(CFO/25/08)

Note: The Authority agreed to consider this item as an 'open' item without the exclusion of the press or public and agreed to lift the Exempt status from the report regarding Allerton & Belle Vale LLAR Consultation Outcomes, except in respect of Appendix A.

At the request of the Fire Brigades Union the Authority agreed to treat Appendix A (Memorandum of Understanding between MF&RA and the FBU) as a confidential document, though it was recognised that the content could be published in the public domain in the future to clarify any disputes as to the interpretation of the document should they arise. The Authority accordingly agreed to treat the document as confidential for the time being.

The Authority considered Report CFO/25/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the outcomes of the three month consultation process on the LLAR Intelligence Report regarding the proposed implementation of the LLAR duty system at Allerton and Belle Vale Fire Stations.

Following a vote it was Resolved that:

The Authority:

- (i) noted the resolution of Liverpool City Council with regard to LLAR proposals for Belle Vale and Allerton Fire Station and is disappointed at the inaccuracy of the Liverpool Resolution.
- (ii) Confirmed there is no downgrading of any fire cover or any fire station. The Authority proposes to build a new fire station at Belle Vale and will make significant investment in Allerton Fire Station. The LLAR system is a well established and agreed crewing system which does not detract in any way from the service provided to the public. Firefighters volunteer to work the LLAR system and receive £35-40K per annum and have over 200 days away from work.
- (iii) approved the extension of the LLAR system currently in operation at Heswall, Formby, Newton-le-Willows and West Kirby, to Belle Vale and Allerton and directed the Chief Fire Officer to implement the system at both stations as soon as possible. Phasing of the implementation is to be at the discretion of the Chief Fire Officer subject to operational demands.

17. Use of Resources & Direction of Travel Assessments 2007
(CFO/15/08)

Members considered Report CFO/15/08 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the outcome of the Audit Commission's 2007 Assessment. **The report contained Exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.**

Resolved that:

The Authority agreed the Audit Commission Use of Resources Report including an action plan (Appendix 1) and Direction of Travel Report (appendix 2), and agreed to lift the exemption on the report following publication of the report by the Audit Commission scheduled at the end of January.