

# **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**11 JUNE 2020**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** Cllr Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair) Councillors  
Lynne Thompson, Janet Grace, Brian Kenny, Lesley Rennie,  
James Roberts, Jean Stapleton, Paul Tweed,  
Andrew Makinson, Steff O'Keeffe, Lisa Preston, Barrington,  
Bruce Berry, Angela Coleman, Doreen Knight, Linda Maloney,  
Emily Spurrell and Edna Finneran

**Also Present:**

**Apologies of absence were received from:**

### **15. Chairs Announcement**

At the start of the meeting, the Chair of the Authority thanked everyone for attending and welcomed any members of the press or public who were observing the proceedings.

The Chair of the Authority then introduced the meeting and provided all present with an overview of how this remote meeting would work and some housekeeping.

A roll call was then taken of all Members present, to confirm that they could hear and be heard and that they could see and be seen.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Edna Finneran, who had been appointed to the Authority by Knowsley Borough Council.

He also thanked Cllr Del Arnall who was leaving the Authority, for her valuable input during her time on the Authority.

### **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) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

**3. Election of Chair**

Nominations were requested for the position of Chair of the Authority for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

Nominee

Cllr Les Byrom - nominated by Cllr Brian Kenny  
- Seconded by Cllr James Roberts

No further nominations were made; and this nomination was unanimously agreed.

Resolved that:

Cllr Les Byrom be confirmed as the Chair of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority for the Municipal Year 2020/21, and preside over the remainder of the meeting.

Cllr Les Byrom commented that he was extremely grateful to have been appointed as the Chair of the Authority. He commented that the Authority is heading into a period of great change and that he felt privileged to serve the Authority.

**4. Election of Vice-Chair**

Nominations were requested for the positions of Vice-Chair of the Authority for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

Nominees

Cllr Brian Kenny and:  
Cllr James Roberts - nominated by Cllr Les Byrom  
Seconded by Cllr Jan Grace

No further nominations were made; and these nominations were unanimously agreed.

Resolved that:

Cllrs Brian Kenny and James Roberts, be confirmed as the Vice- Chairs of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

The Chair of the Authority thanked the Vice-Chair's and all Members of the Authority, for their support and assistance. He also commented that all Members of the Authority are ambassadors for the Service across Merseyside and that it was crucial to have this support at this time.

## **5. Membership of the Authority 2020/21**

Members considered Report CFO/030/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning the changes to the membership of the Authority for 2020/21.

Members were informed that due to the impact of the global pandemic, the Remote Meetings Regulations were enacted under s.78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and came into force on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Members were advised that these Regulations allow for Annual General Meetings to be cancelled or postponed with all positions remaining as they are currently in place.

It was highlighted to Members that four of the five constituent Councils of Merseyside, elected to cancel or postpone their AGM's for 2020, with only Knowsley Borough Council electing to hold their AGM, which resulted in a change of appointment to MFRA for 2020/21.

It was therefore confirmed that there was only one change in Authority Membership for 2020/21, with Cllr Del Arnall leaving the Authority and being replaced by Cllr Edna Finneran.

Members Resolved that:

The content of the report be noted.

## **6. Structure of the Authority 2020/21**

Members considered Report CFO/031/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer:

- (a) Informing Members of:-
  - (i) the minimum legal structure of the Authority
  - (ii) the existing decision making structure of the Authority; and
  - (iii) optional variations to the existing structure
- (b) requesting that the Authority determines an appropriate decision making structure for 2020/21; and
- (c) requesting that arrangements are made for the appointment of Committees, the nomination of Chairs, the determination of the powers and duties of Committees, the appointment of Members to Committees; and Special Responsibility Roles.

The Chair of the Authority advised Members that the proposal was to continue with the existing structure and appointments.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 6.1.3, which makes reference to the re-establishment of the Joint Fire & Police Collaboration Committee. They were advised that it is proposed to continue with the Committee and if approved, it will be added to the Committee Structure chart at Appendix A.

Members were also informed that Appendix B has been pre-completed to reflect the current status, however Members are invited to make changes to this, should they wish to do so.

The Chair of the Authority commented that adjustments can be made within the year if required, but confirmed that the proposal is to maintain the status quo at present.

Members Resolved that:

- (a) The following decision making structure of the Authority and appointments to roles and Committees for 2020/21, be approved:

CHAIR OF AUTHORITY:	CLLR. LES BYROM
Vice-Chairs of the Authority	Cllr. Brian Kenny Cllr. James Roberts

Labour: Group Leader:	Cllr. Les Byrom
Liberal Democrat: Opposition Spokesperson:	Cllr. Andrew Makinson
Conservative: Opposition Spokesperson:	Cllr. Lesley Rennie

Committee	Members
<p><b>Community Safety &amp; Protection Committee</b></p> <p>9 Members (7,1, 1)</p>	<p><b>1 Cllr Brian Kenny (Chair)</b>                  2 Cllr Doreen Knight                  3 Cllr Paul Tweed                  4 Cllr Edna Finneran                  5 Cllr Jan Grace                  6 Cllr Linda Maloney                  7 Emily Spurrell                  8 Cllr Lynne Thompson                  9.Cllr Bruce Berry</p>
<p><b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b></p> <p>9 Members (7,1, 1)</p>	<p><b>1 Cllr James Roberts (Chair)</b>                  2 Cllr Steff O'Keeffe                  3 Cllr Angela Coleman                  4 Cllr Lisa Preston                  5 Cllr Jean Stapleton                  6 Cllr Dan Barrington                  7 Cllr Les Byrom</p>

	8. Cllr Andrew Makinson
	9. Cllr Lesley Rennie
<b>Audit Committee</b> 5 Members (4,(1or1)) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr Linda Maloney (Chair) 2 Cllr Lisa Preston 3 Cllr Jan Grace 4 Cllr Edna Finneran 5 Cllr Andrew Makinson
<b>Scrutiny Committee</b> 9 Members (7, 1, 1) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr Paul Tweed (Joint Chair/ Scrutiny Lead) 2 Cllr Jan Grace (Joint Chair/ Scrutiny Lead) 3 Cllr Lisa Preston 4 Cllr Edna Finneran 5 Cllr Doreen Knight 6 Cllr Angela Coleman 7 Dan Barrington 8 Cllr Andrew Makinson 9 Cllr Bruce Berry

<b>Appointments Committee</b> (3,1,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Opposition Spokespersons	1 Cllr Les Byrom (Chair) 2 Cllr James Roberts 3 Cllr Brian Kenny 4 Cllr Lesley Rennie 5 Cllr Lynne Thompson
<b>Appeals Committee</b> (3,1,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Opposition Spokespersons	1 Cllr Les Byrom (Chair) 2 Cllr James Roberts 3 Cllr Brian Kenny 4 Cllr Lesley Rennie 5 Cllr Lynne Thompson

<b>Member Development &amp; Engagement Group</b> (2,1,1)	1 Cllr Jean Stapleton (Chair) 2 Cllr Lisa Preston 3 Cllr Bruce Berry 4 Cllr Lynne Thompson
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- (b) Should Members be unable to attend a meeting they are appointed to, they are to arrange for an appropriate alternate Member to attend on their behalf, to ensure correct political balance; and inform Democratic Services of such representatives prior to the start of the relevant meeting.

**7. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's Constitution 2020/21**

Members considered Report CFO/032/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning the draft amended Constitution for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) for 2020/21.

Members were advised that within Parts 1 and 2 of the Constitution, the only amendments made are minor typographical changes.

They were informed that some changes had been made to Part 3 of the Constitution, with regards to changes made to the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee, as previously approved by an Urgency Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Members were also advised that the temporary Standing Orders and Procedural Rules for remote meetings, have also been incorporated and appended to the Constitution, to reflect the changes in legislation.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The draft amended Constitution for 2020/21, be approved.
- b) The Acting Monitoring Officer to the Authority, be instructed to keep the Constitution under review.
- c) A further report be brought to the Authority, in the event of any relevant changes in legislation.

**8. Authority Meeting Dates for 2020-21 & 2021-22**

Members considered Report CFO/033/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning the draft dates for Authority Committee meetings and events for 2020/21 and the draft provisional dates for 2021/22.

Members were informed that there had been one change made to the provisional dates for 2020/21 noted at last year's AGM, with the Strategy Day originally scheduled for July 2020, now scheduled for 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Members were advised that the proposed change will enable a more effective review of the situation to be undertaken and provide Members with an opportunity to consider more comprehensive options for the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Members were also advised that scheduled dates for Station Visits and Staff Engagement Events are also included, however these will be dependent on any restrictions still in place.

It was also confirmed to Members that the Authority are able to cancel or amend meetings, under the new Regulations.

The Chair of the Authority confirmed that the Station Visits are informal events for Members and the official meeting dates are published to enable public attendance.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The schedule of meeting dates and events for 2020/21 (attached at Appendix A and provisionally agreed at the AGM on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019), be approved.
- b) The draft provisional dates for 2021/22 (attached at Appendix B), be noted.

**9. Members Allowance Payments 2019/20**

Members considered Report CFO/029/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning payments made to Members in the form of allowances, during the financial year 2019/20.

The Chair of the Authority advised of the requirement to publish information concerning the total amount of allowances paid to each Member, which is detailed within Appendix A of the report.

Members Resolved that:

The information contained within the report and at Appendix A, be noted.

**10. Scheme of Members Allowances 2020/21**

Members considered Report CFO/034/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning the current Scheme of Members' Allowances; and recommendations on any changes the Authority wishes to make to the Scheme.

It was confirmed to Members, that the proposal is to maintain the status quo with regards to the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2020/21.

Members Resolved that:

- a) Continuation with the current Members' Allowance Scheme, be confirmed.
- b) Inflationary increases to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowance, be noted as being aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay. However, the decision at the Authority's Budget meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February

2020, to freeze all 2020/21 Members Allowances for the twelfth consecutive year, be noted.

- c) Their intention to reject any pay increases in line with Firefighters' Pay Award for 2020/21, which would apply to 2021/22 allowances, be confirmed.
- d) Continuation of the combined roles of Co-opted Member and Independent Person, be confirmed, with the individual:
  - i. Being appointed to both the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee.
  - ii. Continuing to consider any complaints against Members, alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct as "Independent Person";
  - iii. Being paid for conducting such roles following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £50 (as and when required) as is the current case.

## **11. Questions on Discharge of Functions**

Members considered Report CFO/035/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning Member nominees from each of the five constituent District Councils as the Members responsible for answering questions in their Council on the discharge of the functions of the Authority.

Members Resolved that:

The following Members be appointed by the Authority as the Members responsible for answering questions in their respective Councils, on the discharge of the function of the Authority for 2020/21:

- Cllr Les Byrom                      Sefton Council
- Cllr James Roberts                Liverpool City Council
- Cllr Steff O'Keeffe                Knowsley Council
- Cllr Brian Kenny                  Wirral Council
- Cllr Lisa Preston                  St. Helens Council

## **12. Appointment of Members to Outside Bodies**



Members considered Report CFO/036/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning the outside organisations to which it is currently affiliated; and to request where appropriate, confirmation of continuing affiliation for 2020/21 and the appointment of representatives to those organisations.

Members were advised that the Local European Issues Forum (formerly the Merseyside Brussels Office), previously included within the list of outside bodies to which the Authority is affiliated, had not been active over the previous year and it had now been confirmed that the forum has been disbanded.

Members Resolved that:

Continuation of affiliation with the following organisations and the appointment of the following Members to those organisations, be approved:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Representative Member</u>
Local Government Association Fire Services Commission	Cllrs Les Byrom, Brian Kenny & James Roberts
North West Employers Organisation	Cllr James Roberts
North West Fire and Rescue Advisory Forum	Cllrs Les Byrom, Brian Kenny, James Roberts and Lesley Rennie
Association of Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities	Cllrs Les Byrom
Safer Merseyside Partnership	Cllr Steff O'Keeffe

**13. Approved Conference and Outside Meetings**

Members considered Report CFO/037/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning approval for attendance at conferences and outside meetings by representatives of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, to be determined by the Chair of the Authority.

Members Resolved that:

Attendance at conferences and outside meetings by representatives of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, to be determined by the Chair of the Authority, be approved.

**14. Meetings with National Politicians at Party Political Conferences**

Members considered Report CFO/038/20 of the Acting Monitoring Officer, concerning the attendance of Members at meetings held at the location of party political conferences, in order to make Authority related representations in line with the Members Scheme of Allowances.

The Chair of the Authority commented that this provision has not been utilised for many years, however it is proposed to agree the recommendation, not for action, but should the provision be required at a future point in time.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The attendance of appropriate representatives of the political groups of the Authority at meetings with Ministers, Opposition Spokespersons and other relevant national politicians, to be held at the location of their own party political conferences, to discuss issues relating to the business of the Authority, be approved.
- b) Payment of appropriate travel and subsistence expenses be approved for attendance at such meetings, but no payment be made for conference fees.
- c) Should Members attend such meetings, issues raised and responses, and progress on information received, be reported back to the Authority.

**15. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2019/20 END OF YEAR REPORT**

Members considered Report CFO/039/20 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the scrutinising of performance against the objectives and the performance targets/outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2019/20 for the period December 2019 to March 2020.

Members were provided with an overview of the report.

Their attention was drawn to the key benchmark performance indicators at Appendix A, the vast majority of which are marked green, highlighting a strong, positive performance.

Members were informed that the total number of emergency calls received, has reduced significantly, as have the total number of incidents and the total number of fires attended.

With regards to primary fires, Members were advised that the total number of accidental fires in dwellings for 2019/20, was 867, which is the lowest amount in the history of MFRA, and is testament to the fantastic work undertaken by staff. Members were advised that moving forward, there are likely to be challenges, however significant inroads have been made and our interventions are having an impact.

Members were informed that there have also been reductions in the number of deliberate fires. They were advised that the total number of secondary fires, which are broadly due to anti-social behaviour, has seen a very significant

reduction of 33%, which again is a result of the fantastic prevention activity undertaken by staff and working closely with our partners.

In relation to Special Service calls, Members were informed that performance has been mixed, with a reduction in the number of water related incidents, but an increase in the number of RTC's. With regards to RTC's, Members were advised that some factors are outside our gift to redress. They were informed that the focus for MFRA has been around reducing incidents involving young people, with significant progress made in this area. However, reducing RTC's across the piste can prove more difficult.

Members were informed that there has been a slight increase in the number of false alarms attended, however this is related to the increasing number of automatic false alarms in domestic premises of vulnerable individuals.

With regards to attendance times against the attendance standard, it was highlighted to Members that the attendance standard was met on 93.9% of occasions, against a target of 90% and that the alert to mobile target was also achieved.

In terms of sickness absence, Members were advised that the percentage of available shifts lost to sickness absence for all personnel, was slightly over target, however this will have been impacted by Covid-19. Members were informed that when Covid-19 related absence is removed from the figures, the target is achieved.

Members were advised that MFRA are delivering significant outcomes for the communities of Merseyside and that the actions within the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Functional Plans, are progressing well and are on target.

With regards to the implementation of hybrid arrangements at St. Helens, Members were informed that the project has been delayed slightly, but is on track to be delivered in Autumn 2020.

The Chair of the Authority expressed his thanks to all staff for the great performance over the past year and for keeping the County safe.

A question was raised by Members in relation to the internal development of Fire Safety Inspectors and Fire Safety Auditors and whether there were plans to increase the number of those staff further.

Members were advised that there were plans to increase the number of Protection staff, with additional one-off funding provided by Government following the Grenfell Tower incident, being ring-fenced to grow the number of Protection staff and deliver against the recommendations in the Dame Hackett review. They were assured that investment will be made in a considered manner and that lobbying of Government will continue in an effort to extend the funding provided, enabling MFRA to respond better.

Members Resolved that:

Performance against the objectives and the performance targets/ outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2019/20, for the period December 2019 to March 2020, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 15 October 2020

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

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