

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

2 FEBRUARY 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Brian Kenny (Chair) Councillors Doreen Knight, Emily Spurrell, Paul Tweed, Janet Grace, Linda Maloney, Lynne Thompson and Edna Finneran

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:

4. Chair's Announcement

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

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

The Chair confirmed that all Members present could hear and be heard; and could see and be seen.

1. Preliminary matters

Members 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, held on 1st September 2020 were approved as a correct record and for signature by the Chair.

3. Bonfire Report 2020

Members considered Report CFO/006/21 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the outcomes of the Bonfire Period 2020 and the continued challenges of deliberate secondary fires.

Members were given an overview of the report highlighting the challenges that were faced for the Bonfire Period 2020.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) adapted its normal tolerant approach, which is to risk assess bonfires allowing them to burn providing it is safe and appropriate to do so with members of the community observing safely. This year the adopted approach was to extinguish the bonfire(s) to reduce social gatherings and limit the associated spread of the Coronavirus through community transmission – a public health approach.

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) crews used the “4E” model in their approach to dealing with the public. The “4E” model was adapted from the policing model of Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce. Enforce was replaced with Extinguish to suit MFRS priorities.

Members were informed that although this period was challenging, MFRA had a positive response, using a proactive approach. There was a small spike in increased incidents, as there were a lot more people purchasing fireworks due to the cancellation of displays due to Covid19.

Members asked if there were links between deliberate fires in areas of deprivation and if this could be looked at. Members were informed that campaigns usually take place in the lead up to the Bonfire Period, but due to Covid19 it could not be done this time. It was added that social media is important to get messages to the public and Local Authorities assisted with this method and helped to fund the hire of a tipper truck, the social media campaign and additional Street Intervention Team deployments.

Members asked about violence at work during this period and what injuries there were. Members were advised that no violence is acceptable and there was an incident whereby a brick was thrown at a service vehicle windscreen. The person involved received no physical injuries and Merseyside Police’s help with regards to this incident was outstanding, as was the support from the public. Unfortunately, no-one was arrested for the crime. Next year staff will wear body cameras which will assist them in their role and that of our partner agencies. Members were informed that all violence at work is serious including verbal abuse and that staff report this as per MFRS procedures.

Members questioned if the Street Intervention Team (SIT) in St Helens was still running and were informed that this team started again in December 2020 and that they have been doing excellent work. Members were advised that the SIT’s have grown over time in all areas and were doing amazing work. They challenge behaviour of youths in an assertive and positive way and direct them to clubs in the area they can attend. SIT’s work together with Merseyside Police and Local Authorities in an attempt to stop Anti-Social Behaviour.

Members asked if the SIT areas could be broken down into individual wards and were advised that this information would be gathered for them. Members were also advised that once the pandemic was over, Members would be able to join MFRS in the campaigns within the communities.

Members asked if MFRS still attended schools with regards to promoting the Fire Service and highlighting the dangers around the Bonfire Period. Members were advised that this does happen but due to the circumstances of the Coronavirus, MFRS have been unable to this year. Members were informed that messages still go out to schools regarding Fire Safety for them to distribute and that as soon as it is possible, staff will be at schools in person again.

Members praised MFRS staff for the work they do and for a wonderful presentation.

Members Resolved That:

The report and the impact that the COVID 19 pandemic had on the delivery of the Bonfire Plan 2020, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 8 April 2021

Signed: _____

Date: _____