

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

23RD MARCH 2023

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors** James Roberts (Chair) Les Byrom CBE, Tracy Dickinson, Harry Gorman, Dave Hanratty, Andrew Makinson, Hugh Malone and Gill Wood

Also Present: Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, Head of Finance and Procurement Ian Cummins

Apologies of absence were received from: Councillor Sharon Connor

1. Preliminary Matters

Members considered the identification of declarations of interest, any urgent additional items, and any business that may require the exclusion of the press and public.

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 to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; and
- c) the following Appendices be considered as exempt as such required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information;

Agenda Item 9 'Proposed Newton-Le-Willows LLAR House Development, Appendix F' contains exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda Item 10 'ICT Managed Services Two-year Contract Extension, Appendix A' contains EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 15th December 2022 were approved as a correct record.

3. Change of appointment to the Authority

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, advised of a change of appointment to the Authority by Liverpool City Council. It was noted that Councillor Anna Rothery had been replaced by Councillor Sam Gorst as the Liverpool Community Independent Group representative.

Councillor Hanratty asked for clarification on who would be the Opposition Spokesperson and he was advised that it would revert to Councillor Makinson.

RESOLVED that Councillor Sam Gorst be appointed to Scrutiny Committee and Community Safety and Protection Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

4. Service Delivery Plan 2022-23 Quarter 3 Update

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented Members with an update on the Authority's performance, against its objectives and targets as set out in the 2022-23 Service Delivery Plan (SDP).

Members were advised that there had been a slight increase in the overall number of incidents attended by MFRS due to crews responding to support other blue light colleagues, most regularly the ambulance service.

The rating for the total number of fires was amber, and it was explained that this was in part due to the hot, dry summer in 2022. Reducing the number of primary fires, including accidental dwelling fires, had improved year on year and that pattern was set to continue into 2022/23.

The Chair requested that the data relating to the percentage of shifts lost due to sickness be shared with the Scrutiny Committee to consider as part of their remit on monitoring performance.

With regards to the percentage of shifts lost, the Chief explained that a performance increase was forecasted for the fourth quarter. Members were advised that as part of succession planning, a significant process of strengthening the number of supervisory management roles had been undertaken and this would help performance moving forward. An overtime ban had also impacted slightly appliance availability. To ensure response standards were met, the Service was able to move to key stations to ensure the impact on response times was lessened.

The Committee discussed climate change and the increase in hot weather which had led to more fires in the summer months. Councillor Dave Hanratty suggested that the issue be raised at National Fire Chiefs Council to determine the impact and stress of climate change on Fire and Rescue Services nationally. Members were assured that government were aware that climate change was an emerging threat in the UK, evidenced by an increase in the number of wild fires that the Service had responded to. A presentation had been delivered to

Government through the LGA which reported on the risk of hot weather and flooding and it was agreed that this be shared with the Members. With regards to wildfires, Members were assured that the specialist stations Formby and Heswall were equipped to handle these incidents due to their rural locality.

Councillor Dave Hanratty noted that there had been an increase in the number of incidents involving automatic fire alarms and asked for further detail. It was explained that the Authority planned to separate the data relating to automatic fire alarms and false alarms to provide a more accurate view of the number of incidents. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Authority did not want to stop people from reporting incidents with good intent.

Members were advised that the Authority had been engaging with housing associations and RSL with regards to the changes to legislation on supported living and it was noted that work was ongoing with the local authorities and the prevention team to engage with private landlords to ensure that residents were not endangered.

Councillor Harry Gorman enquired as to the total carbon output of buildings, noting that work had been commissioned to get to net zero by 2040. It was explained that carbon neutrality was a priority for the Authority and there had been a significant amount of work in Estates to reduce the Authority's environmental impact. This included considering carbon as part of the new Training and Development Academy design and considering moving to alternative fuel for fleet cars. A further report to the Authority on MFRA's Ambitions carbon neutrality would be presented to the Authority on the 18th May 2023.

Councillor Wood asked if the Authority was seeking to run a campaign on being safe during the dry summer season. Members were advised that the Authority ran extensive comms campaigns with prevention during the summer period including guidance on using disposable BBQs.

RESOLVED the attached Service Delivery Plan reports (Appendices A-D) for publication on website be approved.

5. Service Delivery Plan 2023-24

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented the Service Delivery Plan (SDP) for 2023-24 and drew Member's attention to the Station Plans, which focused on issues bespoke to each Station's locality.

Members requested that it be made clear on the Authority's website that the SDP would be subject to change and would be considered by Members of the Authority on a quarterly basis. Each Station's Plan would also be published on the website so that the public could click on their local fire station and see that plan.

The Committee discussed consultation and public engagement with the SDP and it was explained that the Authority sought to gather different perspectives

from the public as to what they wanted the service to achieve. This included utilising opinion research and asking for feedback on proposals from partner organisations. It was suggested that the public tended to engage more with the Authority on social media than on its own website and moving forward social media would be utilised more to communicate with different communities.

RESOLVED that the attached Service Delivery Plan (Appendix A) for 2023/24 be approved prior to publication of a designed version on the Authority's website.

6. Microsoft Enterprise Agreement Renewal 2023

Members considered the request to renew the Authority's Microsoft Enterprise agreement noting that the UK had signed a new three year memorandum with Microsoft which allowed all public sector organisations to benefit from a discount.

Councillor Makinson asked to what extent any critical system were ran through the cloud and what the worst case scenario was for the system went down. Members were assured that the Authority had fall-back arrangements as part of its business continuity planning and the Authority could consider alternative ways of working for Fire Control in the event of an outage.

Members discussed social media and asked if officers were able to access TIKTOK in light of recent government policy. It was explained that Officers shouldn't be accessing social media on their work equipment and access to TIKTOK was blocked with robust policies in place on acceptable use.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the renewal of the Microsoft EA for a period of three years from April 2023 be approved;
- b) the award of the contract to Phoenix to act as the Authority's Microsoft LSP for three years, from April 2023, with the option to extend for a further year be approved;
- c) that A Microsoft EA offers the best value to organisations with 500 or more users or devices that wish to buy software licenses and cloud services from Microsoft be noted;
- d) A Microsoft EA can only be purchased via a Microsoft accredited LSP be noted; and
- e) the contract value with Phoenix is £809k over three years be noted. This includes the cost of Microsoft licenses, cloud services, and a small margin for Phoenix to act as Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's (MFRA)'s LSP.

7. Purchase of Learning Management System

Members were asked to consider the purchase of an organisation wide learning management system that would enable the Authority to develop, deliver and keep a record of training across the estate.

Councillor Les Byrom alluded to the Baroness Casey review of the Police which suggested that Officers should be annually licenced and refreshed and that record keeping needed to be improved. It was hoped that this system would assist the Authority in its management of training records.

Questions were raised about how existing data would be transferred to this system and whether it was being used by any other authorities The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Authority had undertaken a lot of market testing and considered various systems and was confident that this system could adapt to meet the needs of the service and any legislative requirements. Members were assured that any data transfer would form part of the contractors obligations as there was provision for off-boarding in the contract.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the purchase of an organisational Learning Management System (LMS), and a four-year G-Cloud 13 contract with SQEPtech Ltd be approved;
- b) the justification for requiring a new organisational wide Learning Management System (LMS) be noted;
- c) the extensive market research carried out to determine the most appropriate solution for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service ('MFRS') be noted;
- d) the expected improvements in efficiency and effectiveness for training delivery and reduced risk to the organisation be noted;
- e) the drawdown of £87,565 from the capital reserve to fund year one costs be approved; and
- f) the positive financial implications and reduced costs if the contract is agreed by 31st March 2023 be noted.

8. Allstar Fuel Card Contract

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan informed Members that the Authority utilised fuel cards for all fuel not provided by a Station, including response cars.

Member's attention was drawn to paragraph 4.2, which highlighted the Allstar Online Management System, which captured all transactional data for audit and scrutiny purposes.

It was noted that the system was future proofed with regard to electric charging and it could also be used for boats, machinery and equipment.

RESOLVED that the award of a three-year contract to Allstar Business Solutions Limited for the provision and management system of fuel cards under Crown Commercial Services RM6186 framework for all Emergency Services be approved.

9. Proposed Newton-Le-Willows LLAR House Development

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves advised the Members that the appendix to this report was exempt and if they wished to discuss it, the meeting would need to close. It was agreed that the meeting remain open to the public on the understanding that the appendix would not be discussed.

Cllr Dave Hanratty left the meeting at 14:10

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented the report, which provided Members with an update on the progress of the Newton-Le-Willows LLAR (Low Level Activity and Risk) house development.

It was explained that the operational system was predicated on having crews located close to the station. The current properties were fit for purpose but not reflective of ambitions of the Authority or the quality it wanted for the crews working there.

The proposal sought to build new, higher quality facilities closer to the station that would result in quicker response times. In order to future proof the proposal, the plan was for a five-bedroom detached property that could be split for sale in the future if the Authority chose to do so.

Councillor Hugh Malone supported the proposal and agreed that the crew would benefit from better facilities at Newton-le-willows Station. Chair, Councillor Les Byrom added that the staff had made a request for this property design.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the outcome of the formal tender process be noted;
- b) the development be awarded to John Turner Construction at a contract value of £790,318;
- c) the increase in the scheme's capital budget of £99.3k and the drawdown from the capital reserve to cover the increase be approved; and
- d) the estimated reduction in running cost figures outlined within this report be noted.

10. ICT Managed Service Two-Year Contract Extension

Members were advised that the appendix to this report was exempt and if they wished to discuss it, the meeting would need to close. It was agreed that the meeting remain open to the public on the understanding that the appendix would not be discussed.

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented the report which sought to grant a two-year extension to the current provider, Telent. This extension would cover the build of the Training and Development Academy with Telent leading on the server room and immersive command and control suite. The extension included project management support and a pre-alert system.

Members noted that Telent had expertise in the field of net zero and were offering that expertise to the Authority as part of the extension.

RESOLVED that:

- a) a two-year extension of the existing ICT managed service provision with Telent to 31st March 2026, in accordance with the terms of the contract be approved;
- b) the offering of savings, proposed by Telent, in return for the two-year extension be noted;
- c) the change to the current contractual mechanism for annual indexation from 2023/2024, for the two-year contract extension be noted.
- d) that under current arrangements, the contract will terminate 31st March 2024. In 2023/2024 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) ICT and Telent are deploying new technologies and a two-year contract extension will be an enabling factor be noted; and
- e) there are no options for Members to extend the contract for further years as the full term of the contract will be reached on 31st March 2026 be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 27 July 2023