

# YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE WRONG TEMPLATE. PLEASE SELECT “MINUTES” AND RE- MERGE

## MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors

**Also Present:**

**Apologies of absence were received from:**

#### 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.

The Chief Fire Officer did highlight to Members, that as both himself and the Treasurer – Ian Cummins are Statutory Officers, the Authority’s Statutory/ Relevant Officers Disciplinary Procedure, would apply to them. However, it was noted that this meeting is simply to consider procedural changes, therefore having no effect on any individuals.

- b) no additional items of business were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency; and
- c) no items required the exclusion of the press and public, due to the disclosure of exempt information:

#### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

**Resolved** that the minutes of the last meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **3. HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

Deputy Chief Fire Office Nick Searle introduced the report. Group Manager Craig Whitfield presented the Annual Report and then offered any questions from Members.

Cllr Makinson asked if there is a distinction in the report around collisions who are attending incidents under blue lights. Craig Whitfield stated there is a structured process on reviewing incidents. 95% of collisions while under blue lights are at a low speed. However, there is no distinction in the report on the type of collision.

Cllr Wood asked if the report breaks down the weather at the time of report. As if bad weather, collisions are more likely. Craig Whitfield stated the weather is reported in investigations but not in the incident. Craig Whitfield look to break down the report to see weather on the incidents.

DFCO Nick Searle stated that all employees are sent an alert email when weather is particularly bad/ weather warnings are in place. Allowing operational staff to make reasonable adjustments.

Cllr Maloney asked around parking issues. If an appliance cannot get to an incident due to parking issues, what happens to overcome the issue? CW stated a lot of pro-action put into place through prevention department. If an appliance needs to get to an incident, they will do what is necessary to get to the incident.

Cllr Maloney also asked around how Mental Health is recorded. Craig Whitfield responded that Occupational Health and Health and Safety work closely to ensure Mental Health concerns are approached accordingly.

Cllr Tweed asks if we compare our figures with other authorities and if so how do we compare? CW stated that authorities are provided with benchmark statistics. Accident and Injury statistics are recorded however; collisions are not recorded due to the varied statistics. Craig Whitfield is working with other authorities to try compare all statistics.

### **4. People Plan Actions Update**

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Nick Searle introduced the report. Nick Mernock read the People Plan Report.

Nick Mernock stated MFRS have three key headline documents, the Integrated Risk Management Plan, Financial Plan and People plan. The 3 year People plan to run from 2021-2024.

#### **Leadership-**

Six values have been narrowed down to three key values and embedded into the "Leadership Message". Leadership Message training has been ran across the organisational to all staff over last 7 months working with an external training provider "Clarity". The training helps people identify how they work and breaks it down into four colours. Training has been successful and had a high feedback rate. This will be worked into the appraisal system and recruitment processes.

Accelerated Development Scheme to be created and introduced. An internal development scheme to identify high performing staff and get the best people in the roles. Beginning to identify future leaders in all roles.

Continue the CMI courses. These courses are delivered, assessed and verified internally as we are an accredited CMI centre. Level 5 & 7 senior leadership courses starting to run.

Coaching and mentoring. Lynn Hughes to develop and deliver a programme for staff.

Build "Just Culture". This is a tool to open discussions beyond appraisals. Encouraging staff to speak out early and help reduce the grievances. Will take 8-9 months to build these systems and encourage a transparent communication system.

Rewards and Recognition Strategy- system to reward staff in different ways other than pay rises. This system needs to be created.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Looking to work towards creating a "Strong and Inclusive Organisation and a sense of belonging"

We are part of the 1 in 5 organisations that 10% of operational staff are female. We need to increase numbers in BAME employees to match this. We have a process in place to help BAME and Female candidates who fall out in the recruitment process.

There is a role in People and Organisational Development team to help with Positive Action. Candidate yet to be recruited for this. Currently two members of the staff network who are helping with outreach work. A post has been set up in Equality and Diversity team in "Knowing Communities" and work has started in this role. Staff Network now has its own budget to provide work in the community.

Nick Mernock provided members with figures for the August 2022 Recruit Course. Nick Mernock stated we compare well nationally, however we want to improve.

### **Wellbeing Culture**

Wellbeing of staff is always important. Occupational Health, who provide internal and external counsellors, look after Mental Health. If staff book sick with any mental health related sickness, they are provided with an appointment within 3 days. We moved to a Capability process using support plans to support staff

back into work. Persistent short-term absences are dealt with quickly. This has now created a supportive process for staff.

#### **“A great place to work”**

Currently reviewing and building a flexible/hybrid working process. Staff were invited to two meetings, which have now taken place. They allowed staff to bring up any concerns around flexible working. Seen to be as a useful conversation with staff. Process is currently being considered and ongoing.

#### **Workforce planning**

Flexible workforce planning plan to allow work and roles to be filled if people leave suddenly. Can usually plan if people are to retire but we need a continuity plan for if people are leaving the service for other reasons. Plan to allow people at same grade or below to step up and provide resilience if there is a period where no one is in a role. Apprentices across the organisation have been brought in and continue to be recruited to help with this. This may help keep staff in roles from a lower grade and to work their way up.

Nick Mernock completed the presentation and opened up questions to members.

Cllr Makinson commented on the success of Female and BAME candidates in recruitment processes. He questioned the number of BAME Women in the organisation. NM responded to say we support all networks however we are receiving minimal applicants from BAME females across all roles not just operational so it is a broad challenge we face. We could be better however its part of the plan to improve.

Cllr Tweed commented on if we can broaden our networks to Sports, running, social and football clubs to try to help applicants that are coming in. Nick Mernock agreed it is something that can be done.

Cllr Rothery asked Nick Mernock three questions, which he will get information for outside of meeting. How to identify future leaders on the Accredited Development Scheme? How is the Coaching and Mentoring made up if everyone is to learn in a different way? (Question?)

Nick Mernock confirmed the Accredited Development Scheme is not in place yet and will be looked at.

Cllr AM made the point around the global movement on using the phrase “Global Majority” instead of minority for BAME groups.

NM stated he is aware of the movement. MFRS would continue to use the phrase “minority”. If NFCC picks this up in their positive action strategy and it starts to be used across the board then MFRS will then look into it.

## **5. Standing Item: Scrutiny Forward Work Plan**

Ria Groves asked members if they would like to add anything onto the plan, to mention now or to contact Ria after the meeting. No members added at the meeting however Cllr Makinson to contact Ria after.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 12 January 2023