

# **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**21 MARCH 2024**

## **MINUTES**

**Present:** **Councillors** Cllr James Roberts (Chair), Les Byrom CBE, Dave Hanratty, Gillian Wood, Barbara Murray, Terry Byron, Pat Moloney, Lesley Rennie and Edna Finneran

**Also Present:** Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan  
Director of Finance and Procurement Mike Rea  
Monitoring Officer Ria Groves

### **21. Apologies**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Sue Murphy

### **22. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members at this meeting

### **23. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **24. Service Delivery Plan 2023-24 Oct-Dec update**

Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan introduced the Service Delivery Plan and provided an update for the October–December 2023-24 period.

The Chief Fire Officer discussed Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authorities performance and progress against the Service's Functional Plans and the IRMP objectives

Members' attention was drawn to page 22 which displayed the emergency calls received in MFRA's Fire Control and noted the Service's proactive protection activity for the 2023–24 period.

It was reported that there had been a reduction in the volume of calls for 2023, with Fire Control handling 15,991 calls, which was 4,299 fewer than the previous year. It was also noted that, compared to previous years, 97.7% of calls were responded to within 10 seconds.

The Chief Fire Officer praised the staff in Fire Control for their outstanding performance.

Members were made aware of the two accidental dwelling fire fatalities, which were contained on page 26 of the report, and were advised that a correction had been made by the coroner. Members were informed that one of the two fatalities was not caused by fire, and it was concluded to be a cardiac arrest.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that only one fatality would be recorded for the cumulative period. It was added that the fatality was close to the end of this period of monitoring, and it was noted that if MFRA continued to have only one fatality, it would be the lowest number recorded by MFRA. The Chief Fire Officer added on behalf of the Authority, everybody's sincere condolences for the family and the communities of Merseyside associated with the fatality.

It was noted that on page 30, the performance indicators recognised a requirement for work to take place in relation to false alarms due to an increase in incidents..

The Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to page 32 which displayed the shifts lost due to sickness absence, and

reminded the Members that the Scrutiny Committee were reviewing the sickness absence data.

Councillor Hanratty also discussed his concerns around false alarms, it was noted that the numbers of false calls were increasing again. Councillor Hanratty inquired if there was anything Members could assist with relating to recurring patterns of false alarms from hospitals and student accommodation.

The Chief Fire Officer reported the increase and described the type of incidents the service responded to. The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that MFRA would continue to respond and agreed with Councillor Hanratty that unwanted false alarms could be a result of failing apparatus. It was noted that work with the provider of services to reduce the impact of the system not being installed correctly or the apparatus not updated could mitigate and manage the risk.

Members were advised that the increase in incidents was predicated on MFRA's statutory duty to collaborate with other Blue Light Services in response to gaining entry on premises where vulnerable individuals were located.

Members were also reassured that the incidents relating to fire were reduced over the five- and 10-year period. The Chief Fire Officer discussed the national benchmark which is over a 10-year period with a 16% reduction in accidental dwelling fires. Members were also advised that MFRA had a 32% reduction in dwelling fires and noted that MFRA was described as 'outstanding' in its latest inspection from HMCIFRS around its work on community safety and prevention.

Councillor Byron questioned if the service was attending all false calls if it sounded like a fake call. The Chief Fire Officer emphasised that the Fire Control team would challenge if any caller sounded inauthentic and Fire Control would deal with the situation appropriately. It was also added by the Chief Fire Officer that arrangements are in place regarding challenging calls, and it was advised that Fire Control Officers were trained on receiving suspicious calls.

Members' attention was drawn to page 61, Paragraph 1.7, and it was explained that it included essential information about the Authority's legal responsibility to cooperate and work with the Northwest Ambulance Service (NWAS).

The Chief Fire Officer explained that MFRA do an extensive amount of work alongside NWAS, relating to special services calls.

It was explained that MFRA could support cardiac arrest incidents, and the Authority knows that trained firefighters would assist with defibrillation and an effective response. Additionally, it was noted that ongoing national discussions around the role of a firefighter were taking place.

Members were reminded that the Authority has recognised that there is a part that the firefighter could play in assisting the NWAS, with responding to certain incidents.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that this was a national issue and therefore was currently marked as red on the Service Delivery Plan, indicating that the action was not complete.

Councillor Rennie requested further information about people who live alone and use oxygen and how this was managed by the Authority when attending incidents.

The Chief Fire Officer discussed the process for an individual being discharged from the hospital. It was explained that the NHS would ensure that the individual was capable of being discharged and that the environment was safe. It was explained to Members that in and around this time, a Home Safety Check (HSC) and a Safe and Wellbeing Assessment would be undertaken.

Also, it was added that as part of data and information sharing, the Authority must know where oxygen was held in the public's homes across Merseyside.

Councillor Hanratty inquired as to why the status of the action to collaborate with MWAS was coloured red in the report.

It was explained that collaboration between emergency services was being considered nationally alongside the role of the firefighter and as such the action would remain red.

Members were advised by Councillor Byrom that the rating for implementing recommendations from the Grenfell Inquiry was also red, but the Authority was relying on other services and departments to complete certain requirements to progress.

Councillor Byrom explained that additionally, some of the actions promised under Grenfell are the responsibility of the government and conducting an impact analysis was necessary to determine the extent of MFRAS's responsibility in the matter.

It was noted that MFRA would try to continue to strengthen accountability and responsibility for the delivery of those actions and to be clear with the public.

Councillor Murray suggested a change of colour from red to pink in the delivery plan, so that the Authority knew that the actions were outstanding but could not be completed by the Authority alone.

Councillor Moloney noted that there were six hybrid vehicles due for delivery in March and he asked if they were plug-in hybrids or none plug-ins.

Anthony Holland, Estates Development Manager confirmed that the vehicles were plug-in hybrids. The Chief Fire Officer discussed that the Authority was strongly committed to 'going green' but that the vehicles needed to equally function effectively.

**RESOLVED** that Service Delivery Plan reports (Appendices 1–11) for publication on the website be approved.

## **25. Service Delivery Plan 2024-25**

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented the report and explained that the station plans were tailored and bespoke to the station areas. It was explained that the report presented the Authority's intentions for the next 12 months, including the ambitions and plans for the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), functional plans, and station plans.

The Merseyside plan was distilled down into functional areas, including prevention, response, protection, and preparedness. It was added that local management teams look at risks in their community. The Chief Fire Officer noted that some stations had specialist capabilities, as reflected in the CRMP.

Members were advised that the performance indicators for 2023–24 were used to identify the key performance indicators for 2024–25.

The Chair of the Authority, Councillor Byrom, drew Members' attention to the forward-looking report from April onwards and which explained that Aintree Fire Station and Croxteth Fire Station were being merged into the new Training and Development Academy (TDA) Building.

With regards to sharing information with the districts, Deb Appleton explained that the report taken to members was not the version that the partner districts would receive. It was explained that the Authority would incorporate the districts feedback into the CRMP.

Jackie Sutton added that the station plans for Aintree and Croxteth were deliberately included due to them being working stations until the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024; it was explained when an update was provided in June, that Croxteth and Aintree would be removed.

**RESOLVED** that the attached Service Delivery Plan (Appendix A) and Station Plans for 2024/25 (Appendices B-X) be published before the publication of a designed version on the Authority's website. A Word version like that attached to this report will also be available for accessibility to be considered and approved.

## **26. Bulk Fuel Contract Under New CCS Framework**

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented the report that outlined the fuel consumption of the Fire Service and how fuel was supplied. The Chief Fire Officer also noted that the Authority had eight diesel tanks as a contingency plan as part of its business continuity arrangements.

It was noted that the service was moving towards hybrid vehicles, but the Authority had not moved to all-electric vehicles, and it was explained that MFRA was required to maintain the fuel supplier as an effective way of responding to emergencies using the Authority's existing fleet.

The Chief Fire Officer emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Authority provides diesel fuel to the fire appliances and officers' vehicles to be able to respond effectively to any incidents across Merseyside.

The Chair, Councillor Roberts, queried how long the CCS (Crown Commercial Services) Framework had been in place. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the framework had been in use for a number of years, and members were advised that further information would be provided in due course.

**RESOLVED** that the award of a contract estimated at £500,000 from 01/04/24 to 31/03/26 for the provision of bulk fuel supplies under Crown Commercial Services RM6177 framework agreement awarding to Standard Fuels, who is our current supplier, be approved.

## **27. Proposed Refurbishment of Bromborough Fire Station**

*This minute contains exempt information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.*

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 25 July 2024