

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE Authority

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

3 APRIL 2025

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors** Brian Kenny (Chair), Edna Finneran, Jan Grace, Lynn O'Keeffe, Doreen Knight, Chris Page, Lynne Thompson, Ed Lamb and Lesley Rennie.

In Attendance:	Chief Fire Officer	Nick Searle
	Director of Finance and Procurement	Mike Rea
	Monitoring Officer	Ria Groves

18. Chairs Announcement

Councillor Brian Kenny welcomed Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle to his first Community Safety and Protection Committee as the Chief Fire Officer.

19. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

20. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda. While it was noted in respect of Agenda Item 4 that Councillor Knight was a Member of Liverpool City Council (LCC), Councillor Knight confirmed to the Monitoring Officer that she had no involvement in any decision making or oversight at LCC regarding Agenda Item 4.

21. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 30th January 2025 be approved as an accurate record.

22. Procurement of Energy Contracts - Electricity and Gas from 2026/27 onwards

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle, introduced the report explaining that the Authority had historically procured electricity and gas in collaboration with Liverpool City Council (LCC) since 1986 with Members having most recently approved a report in September 2022 to continue the procurement in collaboration with LCC until March 2026.

It was noted that ahead of the contract ending in March 2026, LCC had completed a review of procurement routes to receive the best value for money.

Members were advised that six Public Buying Organisation (PBO) Frameworks were reviewed with three of the six PBO's returning a response. Following an evaluation of their responses, West Mercia Energy (WME) was deemed the most advantageous return.

It was acknowledged that in collaboration with LCC, MFRA have purchased green electricity. However, to avoid increasing the Authority's carbon emissions and bring able to remain on course to achieve Net Zero by 2040, the Chief Fire Officer advised that Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) certificates would need to be obtained at an additional cost to certify the source of the energy. Therefore, Members were asked to approve the delegation of powers to the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Finance and Procurement to assess the best market value and types of REGOs available and to procure REGOs if deemed affordable.

Councillor Jan Grace commented that as LCC had completed research and found that WME's procured energy rates had turned out 20% below the market average as detailed in the report in paragraphs 5 – 8, then it made sense to take this option.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the contents of the report be noted;
- b) the procurement of electricity and gas in collaboration with Liverpool City Council (LCC) and enter into contracts for the supply of electricity and gas via the providers on the West Merica Energy public buying organisation framework for a period of two years with the options to extend for a further one year be approved; and
- c) delegated powers being given to the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Finance & Procurement to assess the market price and energy sources type of Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) when they become available from the provider and, if affordable to the Authority, to purchase REGOs for the energy purchasing period 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2028 be approved.

23. Disposal of 26 Silverdale and 23 Borron Road LLAR Houses, Newton Le Willows

The report was summarised by Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle who advised that Members approved a report in March 2023 for the construction of a new five-bedroom property in Newton-le-Willows to be utilised by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service staff on the Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR) duty system. It was acknowledged that the LLAR house was built on land adjacent to the Fire Station to replace the two older 1960's properties located on Silverdale Road and Borron Road.

The Chief Fire Officer drew Members attention to paragraph 5 of the report detailing the assumption of capital receipt from the sale of both properties being in the region of £435,000.

Both properties had been placed on the market with an asking price of £250,000 for the property on Silverdale Road and £200,000 for Borron Road respectively. Members were advised that there had been limited interest in both properties with two viewings undertaken on Silverdale which resulted in three bids. The first individual offered the full asking price of £250,000.

It was noted that Borron Road remained on the open market and to accommodate a quick sale, approval was being sought for the Director of Finance and Procurement, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer being provided with delegated powers, to accept any future offers for the property that were considered best value.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the sale of 26 Silverdale Road, Newton-le-Willows for the full asking price of £250,000 to the preferred bidder be approved; and
- b) delegated powers for the Director of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer to accept any future 'best value' offers for 23 Borron Road, Newton-le-Willows be approved.

24. The Sale of Vesty 5a

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle, introduced the report noting that on 9th June 2022, the Authority approved the construction of a new multi-pump superstation, Training and Development Academy (TDA) at Long Lane, Aintree. As part of that approval, Members resolved that the marketing for the sale of Croxteth Fire Station, Aintree Fire Station, and the buildings known as Vesty 5a, 5b and Richie Avenue would be brought back to Members for a final approval.

Members were advised that the building was placed onto the open market on 3rd December 2024 and 11 parties expressed an interest in the property. The Chief Fire Officer advised there was a typographical error in the report at paragraph 8 in respect of when the building was placed on the open market with the report incorrectly specifying 2025 rather than 2024.

A date for all bids to be received was set for February 2025 with four bids received to purchase, with one party bidding for both the purchase and the lease option.

The highest offer to purchase the building was made by Burscough Physiotherapy Limited for £531,000.

The Chair proposed to amend the wording contained in paragraph 8 of the report to reflect the correct year of 2024 rather than 2025 as highlighted by the Chief Fire Office. This proposed amendment was supported by each member of the Committee

RESOLVED that

- a) the sale of Vesty 5a to Burscough Physiotherapy Limited for an unconditional bid of £531,000 be approved and;
- b) the amendment to paragraph 8 of the report to reflect the year 2024, be approved.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 4 September 2025