

Public Document Pack



To: All Members of the Community Safety and Protection Committee



R. Groves
Monitoring Officer

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Our ref AK/RG

Date: 26th March 2025

Dear all,

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE** to be held on **THURSDAY, 3RD APRIL 2025** in the Liverpool Suite at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bridle Road, Bootle.

The meeting will be available to watch via YouTube on the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/e1IXq2GY-1Q?feature=share>

Yours faithfully,

PP – A Kirby

Monitoring Officer

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

3 APRIL 2025

AGENDA

Members

Councillor Brian Kenny (Chair)
Councillor Edna Finneran
Councillor Jan Grace
Councillor Lynn O'Keeffe
Councillor Chris Page
Councillor Doreen Knight
Councillor Lynne Thompson
Councillor Ed Lamb
Councillor Lesley Rennie

1. **Apologies**
To consider any apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
To consider any Member declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 5 - 12)
To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 30th January 2025.

4. **Procurement of Energy Contracts - Electricity and Gas from 2026/27 onwards** (Pages 13 - 18)
To consider the report relating to the Procurement of Energy Contracts – Electricity and Gas from 2026/27 onwards (CFO/93/25).

5. **Disposal of 26 Siverdale and 23 Borron Road LLAR Houses, Newton Le Willows** (Pages 19 - 22)
To consider the report relating to the Disposal of 26 Silverdale and 23 Borron Road LLAR Houses, Newton Le Willows (CFO/92/25).

6. **The Sale of Vesty 5a** (Pages 23 - 32)
To consider the report relating to the Sale of Vesty 5a (CFO/91/25).

Please note that this report is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2025

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Brian Kenny (Chair), Edna Finneran, Jan Grace, Lynn O’Keeffe, Chris Page, Lynne Thompson, Ed Lamb, Les Byrom and Lesley Rennie

Also Present: Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan
Head of Finance James Campbell
Monitoring Officer Ria Groves

8. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Doreen Knight (Councillor Byrom attended as Councillor Knight’s alternate).

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

10. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the public and private minutes of the last meeting held on the 5th September 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

11. Change of Appointment to the Authority

Ria Groves, Monitoring Officer presented the report which related to a change of appointment to the Authority from St Helens Council. Members were aware of the sad passing of Councillor Linda Maloney, and Ria Groves reported that St Helens Council had subsequently appointed Councillor Tracy Dickinson to the Authority

It was proposed that Councillor Tracy Dickinson would replace Councillor Linda Maloney on the same Committees.

RESOLVED that;

- a) following the sad passing of Councillor Linda Maloney, the subsequent requirement for St Helens Council to nominate a replacement Member to appoint to the Authority be noted;

- b) the appointment of Councillor Tracy Dickinson as one of St Helens' nominated representatives to the Authority be noted; and
- c) the appointment of Councillor Tracy Dickinson to the following Committees vacated by Councillor Linda Maloney be noted and approved:
 - Policy and Resources Committee
 - Scrutiny Committee

12. Financial Review 2024-25 October to December

James Campbell, Head of Finance, presented a financial review of 2024-25 covering the period of October to December. The report provided Members with assurances that the budget remained robust and that the forecasted expenditure could be contained within the Authority's available resources. Members considered the Authority's revenue, capital budget, reserves and treasury management position.

With regards to revenue, Members were advised that there had been a planned use of reserves and some drawdown from inflation reserves to cover green and red book pay awards as well as some additional internal budget virements. James Campbell noted that the budget remained self-balancing and there was no impact on the overall net budget at this juncture.

It was reported that there had been some savings identified on page 24 and 25 of the report, from non-firefighter employee budget lines, utility cost savings, an increase in investment income and a saving on pay and inflation. This resulted in £800,000 of savings and it was recommended that these savings be used to increase the capital investment reserve to reduce the level of future borrowing.

The capital budget was outlined in the report with a summary of the proposed scheme additions and changes found on page 27. It was noted that officers had reviewed the capital programme with an aim of scoping out start and completion dates for the capital schemes. This had resulted in £2.8million of funds being rephased into 2025/26.

With regards to reserves. James Campbell outlined the movements during October – December as summarised in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the report.

In terms of treasury management, it was reported that the Authority's performance had remained consistent with the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25. Members were made aware that the Bank of England had voted on the 18th December 2024 to maintain interest at 4.75%.

Councillor Jan Grace thanked James Campbell for the report and noted that the significance of putting savings into reserves had been explained to Members at the recent Budget Strategy Day and as such she was in agreement with the recommendations.

Chair of the Authority, Councillor Les Byrom, explained that the Fire Authority did not receive any capital grants from central government and as such it was important how underspend was allocated.

It was noted that the report identified the American elections as having impacted the interest rate, and James Campbell explained that significant global events such as the war in Ukraine or the Oil Crisis could impact the interest rate in the UK due to their effect on economic conditions.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the proposed revenue and capital budget alignments be approved;
- b) the use of the forecast £0.800m savings to fund an increase in the Capital Investment Reserve and reduce the level of future borrowing be approved; and
- c) the Director of Finance and Procurement be instructed to continue to work with budget managers to maximise savings in 2024/25 and use any savings to reduce the level of capital borrowing.

13. IRMP 2021-24 Final Update

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented the report which provided Members with a final update on the IRMP 2021-2024.

Members were provided an update on specific proposals within the IRMP that were showing as amber/red.

Members were advised that the introduction of a Scorpion appliance into St Helens Station had formed part of the IRMP proposals and further work was underway on the vehicle to ensure it had the right kit and equipment on board before being made available for use. It was noted that the procurement process for this appliance had been delayed by factors outside of the Authority's control and it was believed that the introduction of this appliance would be achieved before the end of March.

With regards to the proposal for joint working with NWAS, it was explained that national discussions were underway with regard to the role of Fire and Rescue Services more broadly and the role of a firefighter remained part of those discussions. The Authority was committed to continue working with other emergency services and it awaited the outcome of those national discussions as to how emergency medical response would be envisioned.

Members were advised that the rest of the IRMP proposals were green (complete) and the Chief Fire Officer pointed out some highlights of the IRMP including the introduction of the hybrid duty system at Kirkdale, combining Aintree and Croxteth fire stations and the creation of the new Training and Development Academy and National Resilience Centre of Excellence.

With regards to specialist capabilities, Members were advised of the relocation of the Combined Platform Ladder appliance from Kirkdale to Liverpool City Centre to better align with the number of high rise buildings in that locality.

Finally, Members were advised that the Authority's process for IRMP planning had been very positively evaluated externally by Liverpool John Moores University.

Members commended the Authority on its proactive approach and the Chief Fire Officer acknowledged the impactful work of Deb Appleton and her team in managing the IRMP.

Councillor Page noted the positive impact of targeting the most vulnerable parts of the community and commented that achieving those results for the people of Merseyside was pleasing to see.

Councillor Thompson noted that the Authority had attained these significant achievements at a time when complex pressures outside of the Authority's control were in place, and that should be recognised.

RESOLVED that the outcomes from the IRMP 2021/24 be noted.

14. Bonfire 2024

Area Manager, Mark Thomas, provided the Members with a presentation on the Bonfire period for 2024.

The presentation outlined the planning process for Operation Banger which included discussion with partners, consideration of risks and liaising with communities. During the bonfire period, the Service removed 59 tonnes of material using 6 tipper trucks as well as utilising a trojan appliance in areas of anti-social behaviour.

The Members were shown images from bonfires which showed the risk for the community of such large scale bonfires in residential areas. The heat from the bonfires was significant and if the wind had blown in a different direction, there could have been disastrous consequences for those communities. The Chief Fire Officer emphasised that this kind of activity was not acceptable.

It was noted that community events that met safety requirements were not an issue, but those without adequate safeguards in place posed a serious risk.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that there had been a decline in the number of incidents during the pandemic but now the number of incidents had risen and there were significant concerns about the large scale bonfires being developed and encouraged by some local businesses and social media content creators. There had been a decline in the number of bonfire displays organised by local authorities and as such community groups were not managing risk at these events with the same rigour.

Members were advised that content creators on social media were encouraging competitive bonfire building to a dangerous level and that risk needed to be addressed. It had been reported that there were also businesses dropping off pallets at these events to add to the bonfire which further increased the risk of someone in the community being hurt by an out of control bonfire.

With these concerns in mind, the Chief Fire Officer explained that only events approved by the Safety Advisory Group would be supported moving forward as they would be safer and more regulated.

Officers were developing an unambiguous statement on this issue that would clearly outline what was and was not acceptable.

Councillor Brian Kenny noted the importance of this issue and urged Members to support the Authority's message. Two of the bonfires highlighted in the presentation were within Councillor Kenny's ward and he commented that although it brought the community together, there were many residents who were also afraid of the scale of the fire. The Chair reinforced the Members role was to make decisions that protected the people of Merseyside, and he hoped all Members would support this message.

Councillor Finneran noted the size of the fire and suggested that the local authority should have stepped in to say that the bonfires were too high to be safe. The Chief Fire Officer agreed that there were clear lessons to take away from the last Bonfire period and the expectations of the Authority in terms of what was acceptable, how these events should be managed and the assurances required to hold these events needed to be communicated with the community.

Councillor Lamb thanked officers for the work undertaken during this period which reassured Members that the Authority was taking this issue seriously. He asked if the Authority would liaise with local authorities about the proposed guidelines before the next bonfire period. The Chief Fire Officer explained that local authority colleagues had been supportive given the challenges they faced with unregulated events and it was expected that they would welcome an unambiguous position from the Authority.

Councillor O'Keeffe asked how the Authority worked with these community event organisers to help them understand what was unacceptable in terms of the scale of these bonfires. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Authority sought to work with organisers and hoped they would liaise with the local authority for assistance with matters such as safety requirements.

Councillor Rennie commended Councillor Kenny and his colleagues for their hard work during the bonfire period. She emphasised the importance of embedding parameters in the community to ensure that these events were safe.

Area Manager, Mark Thomas noted that this was a significant challenge for the Service and there was a balance to reach between supporting community events and ensuring the community were kept safe.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the content of the report and the commitment and endeavours of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service in the delivery of the Bonfire Plan through Operation Banger 2024 be noted; and
- b) the increase in incidents this year and the intention of Officers to develop a clear and unambiguous position statement in relation to approved community bonfires (which meet clear safety requirements) and others developed without the appropriate safeguards in place to protect the public be noted.

15. Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatality

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented an analysis on accidental dwelling fire fatalities between 2004/05 and 2023/24.

It was explained that there had been one fire fatality in 2023/24 which was the lowest number on record within the Service. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the work done by Prevention and by firefighters going to the most vulnerable parts of Merseyside to provide smoke alarms had been instrumental in this. Deb Appleton's department were commended on analysing the data that determined where to target resources based on who was likely to suffer an accidental dwelling fire.

Prior to 2016/17 there had been an upward trend in fatalities which led the Authority to prioritise prevention work which subsequently saw a decline in fatalities.

The data was analysed on a district level which allowed the Authority to focus on areas of higher risk. Members were also advised that those over 70 were also at a higher risk of fatality so the Authority was pre-emptively targeting over 65's whose lifestyle may be starting to change.

In 97 of the incidents, the victim was a sole occupant which affected people's survival rate if there was a fire in their home, so this had been another area of focus for the Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the driving force for the team was for there to be no fire fatalities in Merseyside and they would pursue that goal relentlessly.

Councillor Byrom, Chair of the Authority, thanked the staff for their hard work over the years which had brought the number of fatalities down considerably. Councillor Byrom echoed the Chief Fire Officer's comments that the aim was for zero fatalities from accidental dwelling fires and he suggested that the Service considered how to make car accidents more survivable as well as severe weather incidents, once this goal was met and maintained. He suggested

applying the same approach to other fatal incident types to see if the same success could be achieved. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed this work was already being undertaken.

Councillor Finneran suggested each Member report back to their Local Authority about this prevention work to help spread awareness of the Authority's aims.

Councillor Thompson noted that within the report one of the sources of ignition was candles and it was surprising that candles were still popular given the well documented risk of leaving them unattended in the home.

Councillor Lamb commended the Authority on its rich data and noted that the prevention work being undertaken was endlessly inspiring and he hoped it could provide a blueprint for other areas of work such as road danger reduction. It was requested that moving forward, the Authority consider the terminology it uses for accidental dwelling fires to remove the word 'accidental' to highlight that there was always a reason for these incidents.

The Chief Fire Officer assured the Members that the Authority would not rest on its laurels and noted there were new risks to be mindful of like lithium batteries.

With regards to changing the terminology, it was noted that 'accidental dwelling fires' was a national term which allowed the Authority to benchmark against other services but assured Members it would be taken into consideration.

RESOLVED that the content of this report be noted.

16. Workplace Wellbeing Charter

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented the report which highlighted a number of positive outcomes following the Authority's accreditation with the Workplace Wellbeing Charter. It was explained that this was a nationally recognised accreditation which sought to help build healthy and safe workplaces.

It was noted that the accreditation had considered the Authority's approach to culture and inclusion and it was reported that the Authority had 'evidenced a strive for a safe and inclusive structure'. As a result, there were no recommendations for the Authority to consider in regards to improving its approach to culture and inclusion as part of this process.

Councillor Jan Grace commended the Authority on its achievement and reported that she felt that the Service was exceptionally proactive as evidenced through its hard work and leadership.

RESOLVED that;

- a) the incredibly positive outcomes following the Authority's application for accreditation via the Workplace Wellbeing Charter be noted; and

- b) it be noted that Officers will now review and address the very small number of additional recommendations contained within the report.

17. Procurement of Powered Respirator Suits

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, presented the report which recommended that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (as the lead Authority for National Resilience) procured powered respirator suits to replace as part of the refresh of personal protective equipment with regard to chemical, biological and radiological incidents.

RESOLVED that the award of the contract to Respirex Limited for the procurement of Powered Respirator Protective Suits (PRPS) for a value of £3,120,00 be approved.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 3 April 2025

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 APRIL 2025	REPORT NO:	CFO/93/25
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA HEAD OF PROCUREMENT, HYWYN PRITCHARD HEAD OF FINANCE, JAMES CAMPBELL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY CONTRACTS - ELECTRICITY AND GAS FROM 2026/27 ONWARDS		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the current situation regarding the supply of electricity and gas to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and recommend the best option for the procurement of both utilities from April 2026.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) note the contents of the report;
 - b) approve 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 Mercia Energy public buying organisation framework for a period of two years with the options to extend for a further one year; and
 - c) approve 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.

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority has procured electricity and gas via Liverpool City Council (LCC) since 1986 (who procure electricity and gas for use in LCC assets, self-referring Liverpool schools as well as the Authority).

4. Members approved report CFO/040/22 in September 2022 for the continued procurement in collaboration with LCC utilising the Crown Commercial Services framework, RM6251 from 1st April 2023 using EDF Limited to supply electricity and Total Energies to supply Gas.
5. Ahead of the contract ending in March 2026, LCC have completed a review of procurement routes available to ensure we continue to receive the best value for money in relation to our energy contracts.
6. Six Public Buying Organisation (PBO) frameworks were reviewed, three of the six PBO's returned a response and following an evaluation of their responses, West Mercia Energy (WME) was deemed the most advantageous return. WME put forward a commercially competent proposal that held up to scrutiny against a review process carried out by LCC's procurement unit.
7. Responses were evaluated based on customer service, purchasing strategy and energy rates, metering and green energy, and invoicing and terms and conditions.
8. WME state that they "operate a risk managed but flexible energy purchasing strategy which has been designed specifically for the public sector. This model concentrates on delivering the best value for money whilst managing price risk in a volatile market. Over the last 4 years, on average, WME's procured energy rates have out turned over 20% below the market average."
9. In addition, WME say they "will provide a fully managed service, which includes a comprehensive bill validation and payment management service, WME will carry out bill validation before an invoice is sent to their client, any invoices that fail are sent back to the supplier unpaid and managed to resolution by WME team, saving their clients time and money. WME also provide their clients with access to their energy monitoring platform 'My WME'. The platform enables clients to monitor and manage energy consumption, giving an opportunity to reduce their usage and carbon emissions."
10. Following LCC's procurement review and evaluation, LCC received approval from their Executive Cabinet to award a contract to WME for the supply of their electricity and gas for a period of two years with an option for a further one-year extension from 1st April 2026. The Authority will need to confirm by 1st May 2025 if it wishes to continue to procure energy in collaboration with LCC and move to the WME framework.
11. LCC and MFRA have purchased green electricity and at an additional cost, Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) to certify the source of electricity generation, a process which is regulated by OFGEM. The REGOs certify the source of electricity generation and allow customers to account zero carbon for green electricity used. Without REGOs the Authority's carbon footprint would increase effecting it's route to achieving Net Zero by 2040.

12. Members should note that UK customer demand for REGOs has increased due to an increased focus on sustainability and net zero. It is industry practice to offer REGOs within fixed term 'windows' each year. LCC may be required to make a delegated decision to purchase REGOs because in previous years a decision to purchase REGOs has had to be taken swiftly when they become available from the selected supplier. Therefore, Members are asked to approve the recommendation that delegated powers be given to the CFO and Director of Finance and Procurement to assess with LCC 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 purchase REGOs for the energy purchasing period 1ST April 2026 to 31st March 2028.
13. There are three options available for the Authority to consider;
 - a) remain under the LCC energy umbrella contract and move with LCC to the new WME energy contract;
 - b) engage independently with the current framework provider Crown Commercial Services; or
 - c) independently review its procurement route using Public Buying Organisation frameworks.
14. MFRA's Procurement department has considered these options and concluded that option 'a' in paragraph 13 is the most advantageous for the Authority. This is based on the evaluation already completed by LCC including the greater buying power and operational efficiencies as a result from the collaborative approach. Therefore, it is considered that continuing with the current contract (option b) or carrying out any independent review of public sector frameworks (option c) would not offer any further advantageous benefits to the Authority.
15. The long-term arrangement with LCC regarding procuring energy has provided wider benefits such as collaboration with officers regarding our route to achieving Net Zero. If approved, the continued arrangement will be formalised into a Service Level Arrangement (SLA) prior to the start of the new contract.

Equality and Diversity Implications

16. The proposed energy contract change will not affect the supply of utilities but will control and help minimise any expenditure increases. Therefore, there is no impact to people with protected characteristics anticipated from this contract change.

Staff Implications

17. No staff implications have been identified from this contract change.

Legal Implications

18. Although the contract will be directly between the Framework provider and LCC, the Authority can still be assured as to the compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 by accessing the market through the use of a Public Buying Organisation.
19. A service level agreement will be put in place with Liverpool City Council prior to the start of the contract start date 1st April 2026.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

20. The 2026-2028 electricity and gas prices cannot be predicated now in a meaningful way. To mitigate this, LCC compared actual pricing recorded in previous years, in order to obtain a comparison of which supplier was likely to offer best value during 2026-2028. WME was found to be the most competitive.
21. The below tables shows MFRS' spend on each utility over the past four years.

	2021	2022	2023	2024 (to date)
Gas	£146,506	£309,978	£351,475	£163,825
Electricity	£758,582	£2,038,763	£1,685,188	£1,082,974

22. The below tables show the current forecasted costs for LCC, schools and MFRS which form part of the buying power of the new contract.

Electricity user	£m	Tonnes CO2e
LCC	£9.33	7,657
Schools	£4.56	3,740
MFRS	£1.04	858
Whole portfolio electricity	£14.93	12,255

Gas user	£m	Tonnes CO2e
LCC	£3.50	8,487
Schools	£3.03	7,344
MFRS	£0.29	0.29
Whole portfolio Gas	£6.81	16,523

Total cost whole portfolio	£21.74	28,778
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Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

23. There continues to be volatility in the energy market with increased uncertainties and insecurities. If the Authority does not enter into a new energy contract within

good time it could face a major risk of having unmanaged energy rates/ costs in a volatile market and potential interruptions to supply and increased costs.

Environmental Implications

24. The purchase of green energy and REGOs provision, support's the Authority's target of achieving Net Zero by 2040.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

25. The procuring of energy in an efficient way gives stability to the budget planning process and resilience to the supply of energy to operational sites

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/040/22 Procurement of Electricity and Gas from 2023

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA	M erseyside F ire and R escue A uthority
MFRS	M erseyside F ire and R escue S ervice
LCC	L iverpool C ity C ouncil
REGO	R enewable E nergy G uarantees of O origin
WME	W est M ercia E nergy

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MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 APRIL 2025	REPORT NO:	CFO/92/25
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, NICK SEARLE		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	DEB APPLETON	REPORT AUTHOR:	STEWART WOODS
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	ESTATES DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ANTHONY HOLLAND DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	DISPOSAL OF 26 SILVERDALE AND 23 BORRON ROAD LLAR HOUSES, NEWTON LE WILLOWS		

APPENDICES:	NONE
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of progress to dispose of both the redundant Low Level of Activity and Risk duty system (LLAR) houses at 26 Silverdale Road and 23 Borron Road, Newton le Willows following the construction of the New LLAR House.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;
 - a) approve the sale of 26 Silverdale Road, Newton-le-Willows for the full asking price of £250,000 to the preferred bidder; and
 - b) approve 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.

Introduction and Background

3. Members will recall that they approved report CFO/71/22 at the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2023 for the construction of a new five-bedroom property at Newton-le-Willows, to be utilised by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service staff on the LLAR duty system.
4. The new 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 which no longer met the requirements of a modern-day Fire and Rescue Service.

5. The financial business case for the construction of the new LLAR house assumed capital receipts of £435,000 for the two existing LLAR properties; Silverdale at £240,000 and Borron Road at £195,000.
6. The new LLAR property was completed in March 2024 with staff moving in during April 2024.
7. A local estate agent, Bridgfords, have been appointed to sell both properties. Initially the sale of the properties were to be completed via an auction method, however, this process became problematic and both properties were subsequently placed on the open market. 26 Silverdale Road and 23 Borron Road had an asking price of £250,000 and £200,000 respectively.
8. We have had very limited interest in both properties, with only two viewings undertaken on 26 Silverdale Road resulting in 3 bids – with the first individual (Mr John Foster, the preferred bidder) offering the full asking price of £250,000. The second offer received was initially lower than the full asking price and that of the first bid although subsequently an improved offer for the full asking price was submitted. However, this increased offer was received after we had already accepted the highest asking price offer, subject to contract and seeking Authority approval.
9. 23 Borron Road remains on the open market. To accommodate a quick sale, we are seeking approval for the Director of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer to accept any future offers for the property which are considered best value.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. There are no equality and diversity implications arising out of this report. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out previously for the main project under report CFO/71/22.

Staff Implications

11. There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

12. The acceptance of this offer is subject to a contract of sale.
13. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Authority to dispose of land so long as the land is disposed of at the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

14. The sale of 26 Silverdale Road, Newton-le-Willows would generate a capital receipt of £250,000 (less estate agent fees). This is still slightly above the

assumed receipt of £240,000 in the current capital programme. The additional capital receipt will be used to reduce borrowing for the project.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

15. Until the properties are sold, the Authority have a duty to maintain, secure and insure the building including managing risks of theft and arson. Officers will mitigate these risks as far as is reasonably practicable between the date of the closure until completion of the sale.

Environmental Implications

16. Replacing these old properties for a new single property will reduce the Authority's carbon emissions, as the new property has Solar voltaic panels fitted, improved thermal characteristic and energy efficient heating system.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

17. The new LLAR accommodation has improved the working environment for firefighters while the disposal of unnecessary estate continues to manage our assets and risks effectively.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CFO/71/22 Proposed Newton-le-Willows LLAR House Development

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

This report is Restricted

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