

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

3 DECEMBER 2013

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Dave Hanratty (Chair) Councillors Linda Maloney, Les Byrom, Robbie Ayres, Vi Bebb, Andrew Blackburn, Roy Gladden, Ted Grannell, John Kelly, Jimmy Mahon, Pat Moloney, Barbara Murray, Tony Newman, Steve Niblock, Lesley Rennie, Denise Roberts, Jean Stapleton and Sharon Sullivan

1. Chairs Announcements

- I. Members Scrutiny Training for all Members 14th January 2014, Prior to Policy and Resources Committee.
- II. Members Budget Strategy Day, full day at Training Academy, 29th January 2014.
- III. Congratulations to Kieran Timmins on behalf of the Authority for the Award of Financial Director of the Year by Accounting Recruitment, nominated by Grant Thornton Auditors.

2. Preliminary Matters

The Authority 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
- b) no additional items of business were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency; and
- c) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Members considered the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd October 2013.

Resolved that:

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the authority, held on 22nd October 2013, be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly by the Chair.

4. MFRA Annual Audit Letter

Members considered and noted the Annual Audit Letter for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority by Grant Thornton.

5. Update On Financial Position

(CFO/139/13)

Members considered report CFO/139/13 of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer regarding an update on the Authority's Financial Position, based on the latest confirmed Government announcements in order for the Authority to consider strategic options to address the likely future financial challenge.

Members were advised that any impact from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement would be sent out as a briefing to Members.

Resolved that:

The report be noted and the information be used to consider strategic options that will allow balanced budgets to be set in the future.

6. Station Mergers

(CFO/136/13)

Members considered Report CFO/136/13 of the Chief Fire Officer regarding a consultation on Station Mergers proposed in order to meet budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Government announcements which will impact on the financial plan for 2014-16.

There was thorough debate around the recommendations and detail within the report, and the nature of questions which Members may be faced with to address within their own districts.

Councillor Rennie moved a motion, Seconded by Councillor Blackburn: to change the wording within Recommendation 3 of the report to read as follows;

'That Members give delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in consultation with the Chair and Party Spokespersons to;

- i. Identify the most suitable merger sites from which to operate whilst ensuring response standards are maintained.
- ii. Identify potential partners for joint working.

- iii. Undertake the necessary preparatory work around the procurement of appropriate sites in order to expedite the mergers option in the event that Authority approval is confirmed after the public consultation process is concluded.
- iv. Submit a bid for resources to support any scheme as appropriate to any available funding sources

Members voted unanimously in favour of the motion to amend the recommendation, on the condition that consultation with Party Spokespersons did not delay the process in any way.

Resolved that:

1. Members, in order to meet the budget cuts faced by the Authority as a result of Government announcements which will impact on the financial plan for 2014-16, approve in principle, subject to public consultation;
 - i. The options presented for the merger of two stations on Wirral (West Kirby to merge with Upton at within Greasby), two stations in St Helens (Eccleston to merge with St Helens at a site in the St Helens town centre ward) and two stations in Knowsley (the merger of Huyton and Whiston at Prescot which already has Authority approval). These mergers, if approved, will deliver a reduction of 66 wholetime equivalent (WTE) posts, reduce the Authority asset base down from 26 stations to 23 and deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads.
 - ii. The incremental move from wholetime crewing to day crewing to wholetime retained crewing of at least one appliance in Liverpool and/or Sefton, resulting in the closure of one or more stations. This change in crewing and station closure, if approved, will deliver a saving of 22 WTE posts and deliver additional savings from a reduction in premises overheads.
2. Members give delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair and Party Spokespersons to;
 - i. Identify the most suitable merger sites from which to operate whilst ensuring response standards are maintained.
 - ii. Identify potential partners for joint working.
 - iii. Undertake the necessary preparatory work around the procurement of appropriate sites in order to expedite the mergers option in the event that Authority approval is confirmed after the public consultation process is concluded.
 - iv. Submit a bid for resources to support any scheme as appropriate to any available funding sources

3. Members approve the associated consultation process.
4. Reports be brought back on each of the individual mergers as soon as practicable.

7. DCLG Consultation On Fitness And Capability - MFRA Response

(CFO/138/13)

Members considered Report CFO/138/13 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning response to the consultation initiated by the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis on the draft set of principles advanced in relation to Firefighter fitness and capacity.

Resolved that:

The Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority response to the consultation initiated by the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis on the draft set of principles advanced in relation to Firefighter fitness and capability be approved.

8. Statement Of Assurance 2013

(CFO/137/13)

Members considered Report CFO/137/13 of the Chief Fire Officer requesting approval of the Authority's Statement of Assurance 2013 for publication on the website.

Resolved that:

The Statement of Assurance be approved and published on the Authority's website.

9. MFRA Representation On The Board Of the Firefit Hub

(CFO/134/13)

Members considered Report CFO/134/13 of the Clerk to the Authority requesting the change of nominations from the Authority for representation as a Director/Trustee of the Fire Fit Hub Charitable Company.

Resolved that:

- i. A change in the nomination to the Fire Fit Board of Directors/Trustees from Councillor Hanratty to Councillor Newman be approved.
- ii. The Clerk to the Authority to nominate Councillor Newman and deal with the resignation of Councillor Hanratty through the Board and Companies House.

10. Fire Risk Management In Residential Blocks

(CFO/135/13)

Members consider Report CFO/135/13 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning Fire Risk Management in Residential Blocks, in Merseyside.

A motion was moved by Councillor Hanratty, Seconded by Councillor Maloney to add and approve a second recommendation as follows;

‘The Authority fully supports the aims and objectives of the Chief Fire Officers Association’s national sprinkler week which commences on 3rd February 2014 and in recognition of this support requests Officers in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to develop a programme of events in order to highlight and promote the benefits of suppression and sprinkler systems within domestic dwellings and to continue to lobby for sprinklers within all buildings’.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the motion to add and approve a second recommendation.

Resolved that:

- i. The provision of capital funding to support the installation of fire suppression and engineered solutions to enhance the safety of firefighters in purpose built blocks of flats be approved
- ii. The Authority fully supports the aims and objectives of the Chief Fire Officers Association’s national sprinkler week which commences on 3rd February 2014 and in recognition of this support requests Officers in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to develop a programme of events in order to highlight and promote the benefits of suppression and sprinkler systems within domestic dwellings and to continue to lobby for sprinklers within all buildings.

11. Breathing Apparatus Asset Refresh

(CFO/140/13)

Members considered report CFO/140/13 of the Chief Fire Officer requesting the approval of the asset refresh of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority Breathing Apparatus sets ahead of the planned schedule in order to access funding from the Department of Culture, media and Sport Spectrum Clearance Award Panel.

Resolved that:

- i. The purchase of new Breathing Apparatus sets excluding telemetry be approved at an estimated cost of £219,000 ahead of the planned schedule, in order to access funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Spectrum Clearance Award Panel; and,

- ii. It be noted that the telemetry is expected to be funded by government grant (£133,000).

Close.

Next meeting 11th February 2014

Signed: _____

Date: _____