

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

27 MARCH 2014

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Linda Maloney (Chair) Councillors Vi Bebb, John Kelly, Jimmy Mahon, Barbara Murray, Tony Newman, Jean Stapleton and Lesley Rennie

Also Present: Councillors Roy Gladden, Ted Grannell, and Dave Hanratty; and Independent Person Anthony Boyle

1. Preliminary matters

Members considered the identification of declarations of interest, any urgent additional items, and any business that may require the exclusion of the press and public.

Resolved that:

a) The following declarations of interest were made by Members in respect of Items on the Agenda:

- As elected representatives on District Councils within the Merseyside region, all Elected Members present declared a personal interest in the following item:

Agenda Item 4 – Renewal of Membership of the Local Enterprise Partnership (Formerly the Mersey Partnership)

- Cllr Lesley Rennie declared a personal interest in **Agenda Item 12 – External Funding For Prevention And Road Safety** due to being a Trustee of the Fire Support Network.

b) no additional items of business to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; 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.

It was proposed by the Chair and resolved by the Committee that Agenda Item 5 be taken after Agenda Item 9.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Community Safety & Protection Committee, held on 19th December 2013, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. EXTENSION OF THE PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME TO FIRE SAFETY

Members considered Report CFO/026/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the statutory duty that will be placed on Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) in relation to the enforcement of fire safety legislation, as a result of the extension of the Primary Authority Scheme (PAS) to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ("The Order").

It was noted that the extension of the Primary Authority Scheme, was the subject of a Learning Lunch prior to the meeting; at which a number of questions were raised by Members, including questions relating to:

- the process for deciding which Authority will be the Lead Authority for a particular business.
- ensuring that our standards are adhered to by other authorities when we are the Lead Authority.
- capacity to facilitate these partnerships.
- potential to establish a social enterprise to undertake this work.
- risks associated with differing standards between authorities.
- the process for communication of information between authorities.
- reporting back to Members regarding the progress of this scheme.

It was reported that during the Learning Lunch a suggestion had been made that regular update reports be submitted to the Community Safety & Protection Committee regarding progress with this scheme; with any specific developments being reported to Members as required.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The extension of the Primary Authority Scheme to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the requirement to abide by the terms and conditions of the Scheme when undertaking its regulatory activities, be noted.
- b) The active participation of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority in delivering the Scheme, be endorsed.
- c) Regular update reports be submitted to the Community Safety & Protection Committee regarding progress with this scheme; with any specific developments being reported to Members as required

4. Renewal of Membership of Local Enterprise Partnership (Formerly the Mersey Partnership)

Members welcomed Mr Mike Palin - representing the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Mr Palin provided Members with a presentation outlining work undertaken by the LEP, to enable Members to consider the benefits to the Authority in continuing Membership of the Partnership for 2014/15.

The presentation provided Members with an overview of the strategic plans for the City Region and the areas identified for development, for which funding will be bid for.

Members raised several questions in relation to the presentation; around timescales of the bidding process, proposed work to improve access to the Port of Liverpool and potential issues for the Sefton area, the position of the LEP with regards to fracking; and how the Authority could ensure that it is consulted during the design stage of any proposed building works.

Members then considered Report CFO/022/14 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning the proposal that the Authority continues its membership of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Members Resolved that:

- a) the Authority continue its membership of the LEP for 2014/15.
- b) a copy of the presentation slides be provided to all Members.

6. Budget Resolution Transitional Response Arrangements - Order Of Appliance Unavailability

Members considered Report CFO/038/14 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the sequence in which appliance and therefore stations will become unavailable due to insufficient staffing, as firefighter numbers are reduced to meet the savings target required as a result of Government cuts to the Authority budget; and prior to structural changes in relation to station mergers/ closures are made.

Members were informed that the issues in relation to appliance availability are not as a result of the Authority employing too few staff, but are due to having insufficient numbers of staff available for full operational duties at any given time.

It was noted that a Task & Finish Group of the Authority are currently reviewing sickness absence and associated HR Policies and Procedures; and a report containing their feedback and recommendations will be brought back to the Authority for consideration in due course.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that he had spoken with each of the District Leaders to make them aware of the situation with regards to appliance unavailability.

Members were also advised that negotiations continue with the FBU over additional voluntary hours, with both parties working together to try to reach a resolution.

The Chair of the Committee informed Members of a letter received from the FBU affirming their commitment to work with the Authority during these challenging times.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The content of the report be noted.
- b) The letter received from the FBU, be circulated to all Members for their information.

7. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service National Deployments During The Recent Wide Area Flooding

Members considered Report CFO/023/14 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the recent out of area deployments of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) personnel and national assets, in response to wide area flooding in Lincolnshire, Essex, Somerset and Thames Valley.

Members raised a number of questions concerning the use of MFRA assets during the floods and cost recovery.

Members commented that the report was very useful in assisting the public understanding of the Authority's involvement in the floods and as a means of highlighting the importance of Authority's such as Merseyside remaining whole time, to enable them to provide such assistance.

It was moved by Cllr Maloney and seconded by Cllr Murray that The Chair of the Authority write to relevant Ministers and MP's, to highlight the involvement of MFRA in the response to the recent floods; and highlighting the potential impact that continuing cuts to the Authority's budget may have on its ability to respond to such incidents in the future. This was approved unanimously

It was further moved by Cllr Mahon and seconded by Cllr Maloney that the Chief Fire Officer attend any Ward meetings, as requested, to provide the public with information concerning the response of MFRA during the recent floods. This was also approved unanimously.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The contents of the report be noted.

- b) The Chief Fire Officer attend any Ward meetings, as requested, to provide the public with information concerning the response of MFRA during the recent floods.
- c) The Chair of the Authority write to relevant Ministers and MP's, to highlight the involvement of MFRA in the response to the recent floods; and highlighting the potential impact that continuing cuts to the Authority's budget may have on its ability to respond to such incidents in the future.

8. Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) Consolidation Exercise

Members considered Report CFO/024/14 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the hosting of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) consolidation exercise, by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority.

Members were informed that the date of the exercise has now been moved to 18th September 2014.

Members were also provided with a brief update on the progress of the Joint Control Centre.

Members resolved that the contents of the report be noted.

9. Appointment Of The Uniformed Principal Officers Into CFOA Lead Roles

Members considered Report CFO/028/14 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) as the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) strategic lead for National Resilience; and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) as the strategic lead for Children and Young People (CYP).

Members were informed of the extensive work undertaken within MFRA working with Children and Young People and that the Authority continue to lead the way in this area.

It was moved by Cllr Maloney and seconded by Cllr Mahon that the CFO and DCFO should be congratulated for these high profile positions.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The appointments be noted.
- b) The officers be congratulated on these high profile appointments.

5. National Sprinkler Week 2014

Members were provided with a presentation by Station Manager Andy Groom, concerning the Sprinkler Symposium held at the Training & Development Academy, for private local landlords within Merseyside, in support of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) National Sprinkler Week.

The presentation provided Members with clips of the live demonstration provided at the event, which demonstrated how sprinkler systems can reduce the impact of fire.

Members were informed that the presentation has also been shared with housing associations.

Questions were raised by Members concerning the cost of fitting sprinkler systems and insurance for properties fitted with sprinkler systems.

Members then considered Report CFO/030/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the activities undertaken on Merseyside in support of the CFOA National Sprinkler Week.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The positive outcomes from National Sprinkler Week, in particular the Sprinkler Symposium and the next steps for working with stakeholder to retrofit sprinkler systems in purpose built blocks of flats be noted.
- b) Their thanks be conveyed to SM Andy Groom and all other staff involved in the activities during National Sprinkler Week.

10. Service Plan 2014/15

Members considered Report CFO/027/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the Service Delivery Plan for 2014/15.

Members were provided with an overview of the Service Plan for 2014/15, which highlighted changes to the performance indicators in terms of focusing more on outcomes rather than outputs; and proposed changes to the way in which performance will be reported back to Members for scrutiny.

Members were notified of a change to one of the Equality Objectives contained within the Plan, concerning recruitment of female and minority ethnic individuals. The change was made to ensure that the objective reflects the Authority's commitment to promoting the Fire and Rescue Service as a career and encouraging applications from such individuals, whilst ensuring that the person appointed is the best person for the role.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer also provided an overview of performance against the current Plan; and explained measures taken to address any areas of under performance.

Members welcomed the changes to the Plans for 2014/15 and the Equality Objectives.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The Service Delivery Plan for 2014/15, be approved.
- b) The Service Delivery Plan for 2014/15, be published on the Authority's Website.

11. District and Station Community Safety Plans 2014/15

Members considered Report CFO/034/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the District Community Safety Plans for 2014/15, which reflect an inclusive approach to planning on Districts that has involved a wide range of staff and stakeholders.

Members were provided with copies of the Equality Impact Assessments for each District, in support of this report.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an overview of the Plans and the work undertaken alongside partners to ensure that the Plans represent the key priorities for each District. Changes made to the Plans, such as the inclusion of information concerning the demographics of the District; and contact details for key members of staff, were also highlighted.

Members thanked all involved in the production of the Plans.

Members Resolved that:

The District Community Plans for 2014/15, be approved for publication on the Authority's Website and distribution to stakeholders and partners.

12. External Funding for Prevention and Road Safety

Members considered Report CFO/029/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the current provision of external funding received by the Authority to deliver community safety related outcomes across each District of Merseyside.

It was highlighted to Members that for every pound the Authority provides to the Fire Support Network to deliver community related activities, the Fire Support Network manage to secure an extra £5 in funding to support these activities.

Members were also informed that some staff, particularly those delivering youth engagement programmes, rely on external funding to fund their posts. As avenues for funding reduce, several members of staff have been placed at risk of redundancy until funding can be secured.

The Chair of the Committee requested that all Members try to identify and secure funding within their local authorities, to enable the continuation of community safety activities.

Members Resolved that:

The contents of the report, in particular the risk to the sustainability of funding provision and the work undertaken to mitigate the risk, be noted.

13. Prosecutions Update

Members considered Report CFO/035/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the enforcement and prosecution activity carried out by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) Protection Department throughout 2013.

Members were provided with an overview of the report; and raised several questions in relation to evidence captured at premises and the use of CCTV and body camera's; the recovery of costs in relation to prosecutions; and how we work with partners during enforcement and prosecution activities.

Members also suggested that officers look into the possibility of providing training to judges and magistrates, to try to ensure that the Authority are awarded the maximum costs possible when prosecution cases are considered.

Members Resolved that:

The positive impact that the Authority has had on the safety of the communities of Merseyside, whilst carrying out its statutory function as the enforcing Authority, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Annual General Meeting 26th June 2014

Signed: _____

Date: _____