

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

14 JANUARY 2014

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair) Councillors Robbie Ayres, Dave Hanratty, Ted Grannell, Steve Niblock, Denise Roberts, Sharon Sullivan and Pat Moloney

Also Present: Cllr Linda Maloney, Cllr Lesley Rennie and Anthony Boyle (Independent Person)

Apologies of absence were received from:
Cllr Roy Gladden

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) no declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) The Chair determined that due to very short timescales given by government for consultation and the need to discuss with partners the approach to a shared response, that:
 - Item 7: Government Consultation on the Biding Process for 2015/16 Transformation Funds Report CFO/008/14, and;
 - Item 8: Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15 Report CFO/009/14, be admitted onto the Agenda and consideration as additional urgent items of business.
- c) The Following Items of business required the exclusion of the Press and Public:
 - Item 3: Part 2 of the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th November 2013, due to containing information Exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and;
 - Item 6: Licences for the Playing of Music and Films Report CFO/005/14, due to containing exempt information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 19th November 2013, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Part 2 - EXEMPT Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair determined that Part 2 – Exempt Minutes of the previous meeting 19th November 2013 be considered following consideration of all open business on the Agenda. Therefore Item 3 was moved and considered after item 8.

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19th November 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

4. Joint Control Centre Update

Members considered Report CFO/004/14 of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, providing an update regarding progress of the work-streams associated with the Joint Command and Control Centre development including the Heritage Centre and related Workshops works, and forward look at key milestones to practical completion.

The opportunity to speak to contractors regarding any future slippage was discussed, and it was suggested that it be appropriate to bring a lessons learned report to a future Performance and Scrutiny Committee, and consider requesting the attendance of an appropriate representative from the contractors.

Members commented on the good development of the project and expressed appreciation to all staff involved in the project delivery.

Members welcome the completion of this major project and look forward to a tour of the new facilities once it is safe to do so.

Resolved that:

- a) The report be noted;
- b) Members considered the financial implications section of the report, and acknowledge the overall project cost rise from £11.4m to £11.7m due to some variations in requirements.
- c) £163,000 of the Capital reserve established to cover unforeseen variations and manage associated risks of major capital projects, be allocated to cover the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority attributed costs.

- d) Delegated power be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer to approve any further minor variations required to the capital budget for finalised variations, in consultation with the Chair, and to fund these from the capital reserve that Members have set aside for this purpose.

5. Freedom of Information Requests

Members considered report CFO/001/14 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advising of the number of Freedom of Information requests received between 2011 and 2013.

It was noted that it would be useful to include an additional column in the table to categorise where requests had been received from the same individual/s to identify repeat requesters.

It was noted that some of the requests related to information which should be readily available, to which it was confirmed that where this as the case the requester was directed to where to locate the information.

Resolved that:

The report be noted

6. Licences for the Playing of Music and films

The Chair determined that due to the report containing Exempt information, Item 6: Licences for Playing Music and Films be considered after item 3 – which follows item 8 of the Agenda, with the exclusion of the press and public.

Members considered report CFO/005/14 of the Clerk to the Authority, concerning the requirements for licences for playing of music and films on Fire and Rescue Authority premises.

Considerable debate took place in the form of Members distaste against the right to charge a Public Service, along with other businesses and charitable organisations, for the playing of music and films on premises, and possible ways around such costs which equate to 1 Firefighter post per year.

Members were advised by the Clerk to pay the licences, as to not do so would be unlawful.

Resolved that:

After much debate The Chair moved that:

- a) Members agree to comply with the law and meet legal obligations;

- b) Officers be authorised to continue to look into negotiations with licencing organisations to reduce licence costs;
- c) The budget be aligned for 2014/15 to allow for payment of licences ;
- d) The Authority lobby Ministers, with other Fire and Rescue Authorities and public bodies, to seek recognition that budgets have been pressed, and such Licences should not be applicable, and request that it be included on the LGA agenda.

Unanimously agreed by Members.

7. Government Consultation on the Bidding Process for 2015/16 Transformation Funds

Members considered report CFO/008/14 of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer regarding the proposed response from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to Government in relation to consultation on the bidding process for 2015/16 Transformation Funds.

This was accepted on to the agenda as an urgent item due to very short timescales given by government for consultation and the need to discuss with partners the approach to a shared response.

Resolved that:

- a) The report be noted, and;
- b) The proposed response be approved.

8. Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15

Members considered report CFO/009/14 of the Deputy Chief Executive Officer regarding the proposed response from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority in relation to the Local Government Finance Settlement 2014/15.

This report was accepted on to the agenda as an urgent item due to very short timescales given by government for consultation and the need to discuss with partners the approach to a shared response.

Resolved that:

- a) The report be noted, and
- b) The draft response be approved.

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 1 April 2014