

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION SUB-COMMITTEE

2 SEPTEMBER 2014

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Jimmy Mahon (Chair) Councillors Les Byrom,
Roy Gladden, Linda Maloney and Tony Robertson

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:

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) 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.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th March 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Industrial Relations Update

(CFO/090/14)

Members considered Report CFO/090/14 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning matters of negotiation and consultation currently being progressed with Representative Bodies.

The Chief Fire Officer provided Members with a detailed update, which highlighted progress in relation to a number of areas.

Members were informed that the Joint Secretaries have successfully concluded consultation on 121 new or amended Service Instructions.

Following approval by the Authority of a new Conduct & Performance Policy and suite of associated Service Instructions, Members were informed that the Fire Brigades Union have registered a dispute. A conciliation meeting has been arranged with the National Joint Secretaries for 10th and 11th September 2014 to consider this matter, the outcomes of which will be reported back to this Committee.

The Chief Fire Officer recapped on the rationale behind engaging with Merseyside Police to create a Merseyside Joint Command and Control Centre and updated Members on the progress of the project - highlighting that the MFRA element of the Joint Command and Control Centre has now gone live and control staff are now working a 12 hour duty system.

Members were informed that throughout the ongoing national dispute between the Government and the Fire Brigades Union, resilience for MFRA has been provided by Wholetime Firefighters. The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that the Authority has continued to accept part performance from those employees taking industrial action and the Fire Brigades Union locally has taken a responsible approach to the industrial action.

In relation to the Collective Agreement in place for 24 hour working, Members were informed that 24 hour working will be considered at locations where there is a strong operational rationale for doing so. It is intended that the issue of interpretation of the Collective Agreement will be considered at the Conciliation meeting with the National Joint Secretaries on 10th and 11th September 2014.

In terms of changes to the provision of command support at operational incidents, Members were informed that changes have been identified which will free up a number of operational posts, which can be re-distributed across the organisation to improve appliance availability. Consultation over the changes concluded successfully on 13th August 2014.

Members were also updated on progress regarding the introduction of self-managed teams. The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that in his view, self-rostering would be the best way of retaining a wholetime duty system, reducing sickness absence and providing teams with a sense of ownership and control over staffing.

The final area, on which Members were updated, was around the Independent Review of Conditions of Service. A questionnaire has been issued by the Government, a response to which will be provided by the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of the Authority. Given the timescales, Members were advised that it would not be possible to bring the drafted response to Members for consideration prior to the submission deadline, but assured the Committee that the response would only represent Authority policy.

Members were also informed that the FBU have advised their members not to respond to the questionnaire.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The progress being made to maintain effective and constructive industrial relations with Representative Bodies, be noted.
- b) The progress being made to deliver the Authority's IRMP and other key objectives, be noted.
- c) The outcomes of the Conciliatory Meeting with the National Joint Secretaries, to be held on 10th and 11th September 2014, be reported back to the next meeting of the Committee.
- d) Thanks be placed on record to all involved in maintaining good industrial relations; and their hard work in progressing matters of consultation and negotiation.

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 2 December 2014

Signed: _____

Date: _____