

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

13 JUNE 2019

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair) Councillors
Lynne Thompson, Janet Grace, Brian Kenny, Lesley Rennie,
James Roberts, Jean Stapleton, Paul Tweed,
Andrew Makinson, Steff O'Keeffe, Lisa Preston, Del Arnall,
Dan Barrington, Bruce Berry, Angela Coleman, Doreen
Knight, Linda Maloney and Emily Spurrell

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:

17. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chair of the Authority paid thanks to the Members who were leaving, or had left the Authority. He thanked them all for their valuable input during their time on the Authority; and commented that they will hopefully be leaving the Authority as ambassadors for the service.

The Chair of the Authority advised that those Members leaving would be presented with a small gift, on behalf of the Authority. He also provided some background information to the provenance of the picture depicted on the gift.

Of those Members leaving the Authority, the Chair advised that Cllr Sharon Connor, Cllr Roy Gladden and Joe De'Asha, were all in attendance. Each was invited forward to be presented with their gift; and to have their photograph taken with the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.

Following the presentation, all Members of the Authority were requested to remain at the end of the meeting, to enable a photograph to be taken of the whole Authority.

Prior to the start of the meeting, information regarding general housekeeping was provided by the Chair to all in attendance.

The Chair confirmed to all present that the proceedings of the meeting would be filmed and requested that any members of the public present who objected to being filmed, make themselves known. No members of the public voiced any objection therefore the meeting was declared open and recording commenced.

At the start of the meeting, the Chair of the Authority invited all Members to introduce themselves.

The Chair then welcomed all new Members; and commented that he hoped they all enjoyed their time on the Authority; and felt as privileged to be here as he does.

The Chair of the Authority then congratulated a previous employee, Joanne Stephens, on being awarded the Queens Fire Service Medal in the recent Honours list.

1. 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.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on 21st May 2019, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Petition

The Chair of the Authority advised Members of the process for receiving petitions. He confirmed that the petitioner will be called to present their petition, which will be limited to five minutes, following which Members will have a further five minutes to ask questions of the petitioner, with any such questions being asked and answered without further discussion.

The petitioner – Mr Brace, was then called to present his petition.

Mr Brace began by referring to two issues which were not part of the petition.

Mr Brace then stated that the petition relates to two issues: the deletion of Standing Order 19.4 within MFRA's Constitution; and changes to MFRA's Meeting Reporting Protocol and Procedure. The specific changes being requested were highlighted.

Mr Brace confirmed that the petition had received 14 signatures.

The Chair of the Authority asked Members if they had any questions in relation to the petition. No questions were raised.

The Chair of the Authority then read out a detailed response following legal advice , in relation to this petition.

It provided clarification around the legislation; and the specific wording of the sections referred to within the Constitution and the Protocol on Reporting at Meetings. It was confirmed to Members that the sections of both documents referred to, comply fully with the legislation. However, the section within the Protocol on Reporting at Meetings, had been amended slightly to provide greater clarification.

Members Resolved that:

The content of the petition; and the response provided, be noted.

4. Election of Chair of the Authority

Nominations were requested for the position of Chair of the Authority for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

Nominee

Cllr Les Byrom - nominated by Cllr Brian Kenny
- Seconded by Cllr James Roberts

No further nominations were made; and this nomination was unanimously agreed.

Resolved that:

Cllr Les Byrom be confirmed as the Chair of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority for the Municipal Year 2019/20, and preside over the remainder of the meeting.

5. Election of Vice-Chair of the Authority

The Chair of the Authority advised of the decision to revert back to having two Vice-Chair positions, with each responsible for chairing one of the two main Committees.

Nominations were then requested for the positions of Vice -Chair of the Authority for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

Nominees

Cllr Brian Kenny and:
Cllr James Roberts - nominated by Cllr Les Byrom
Seconded by Cllr Jan Grace

No further nominations were made; and these nominations were unanimously agreed.

Resolved that:

Cllrs Brian Kenny and James Roberts, be confirmed as the Vice- Chairs of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

6. Membership of the Authority 2019/20

Members considered Report CFO/035/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning changes to the Membership of the Authority for 2019/20.

Members Resolved that:

The content of the report, be noted.

7. Structure of the Authority 2019/20

Members considered Report CFO/036/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the structure of the Authority for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

Members were advised that with the exception of the re-introduction of two Vice-Chair positions, there were no significant changes proposed to the structure of the Authority, with only some minor amendments to the Scrutiny function, which were highlighted within the report.

Members Resolved that:

- (a) The following decision making structure of the Authority and appointments to roles and Committees for 2018/19, be approved:

CHAIR OF AUTHORITY:	CLLR. LES BYROM
Vice-Chairs of the Authority	Cllr. Brian Kenny Cllr. James Roberts

Labour: Group Leader:	Cllr. Les Byrom
Liberal Democrat: Opposition Spokesperson:	Cllr. Andrew Makinson
Conservative: Opposition Spokesperson:	Cllr. Lesley Rennie

Committee	Members
Community Safety & Protection Committee	1 Cllr Brian Kenny (Chair) 2 Cllr Doreen Knight 3 Cllr Paul Tweed

9 Members (7,1,1)	4 Cllr Del Arnall 5 Cllr Jan Grace 6 Cllr Linda Maloney 7 Emily Spurrell 8 Cllr Lynne Thompson 9. Cllr Bruce Berry
Policy & Resources Committee 9 Members (7,1,1)	1 Cllr James Roberts (Chair) 2 Cllr Steff O'Keeffe 3 Cllr Angela Coleman 4 Cllr Lisa Preston 5 Cllr Jean Stapleton 6 Cllr Dan Barrington 7 Cllr Les Byrom 8. Cllr Andrew Makinson 9. Cllr Lesley Rennie
Audit Committee 5 Members (4,(1or1)) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr Steff O'Keeffe (Chair) 2 Cllr Emily Spurrell 3 Cllr Jean Stapleton 4 Cllr Linda Maloney 5 Cllr Andrew Makinson
Scrutiny Committee 9 Members (7,1,1) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr Paul Tweed (Joint Chair/ Scrutiny Lead) 2 Cllr Jan Grace (Joint Chair/ Scrutiny Lead) 3 Cllr Lisa Preston 4 Cllr Del Arnall 5 Cllr Doreen Knight 6 Cllr Angela Coleman 7 Dan Barrington 8 Cllr Andrew Makinson 9 Cllr Bruce Berry

Appointments Committee (3,1,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Opposition Spokespersons	1 Cllr Les Byrom (Chair) 2 Cllr James Roberts 3 Cllr Brian Kenny 4 Cllr Lesley Rennie 5 Cllr Lynne Thompson
Appeals Committee (3,1,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Opposition Spokespersons	1 Cllr Les Byrom (Chair) 2 Cllr James Roberts 3 Cllr Brian Kenny 4 Cllr Lesley Rennie 5 Cllr Lynne Thompson

Member Development &	
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Engagement Group (2,1,1)	1 Cllr Jean Stapleton (Chair) 2 Cllr Lisa Preston 3 Cllr Bruce Berry 4 Cllr Lynne Thompson
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b) Should Members be unable to attend a meeting they are appointed to, they are to arrange for an appropriate alternate Member to attend on their behalf, to ensure correct political balance; and inform Democratic Services of such representatives prior to the start of the relevant meeting.

8. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority Constitution 2019/20

Members considered Report CFO/034/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the draft amended Constitution for Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (the Authority) for 2019/20.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the key changes to the document.

They were advised that some changes had been made with regards to the Terms of Reference for Committees and around scrutiny; and as a result of changes in legislation.

Further changes were also highlighted in relation to Contract Standing Orders, which were mainly in relation to exemptions.

Members attention was drawn to the Officer and Member Relations Protocol, contained within the Constitution, which all Members were urged to read.

Members were advised that if the Constitution is approved, the document will be published onto the Authority's Website; and that all new Members will be provided with a hard copy of the document for their reference; and existing Members provided with updated pages.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The draft amended Constitution for 2019/20, be approved.
- b) The Monitoring Officer to the Authority, be instructed to keep the Constitution under review.
- c) In the light of any changes in legislation, a further report be brought back to the Authority in these circumstances.
- d) The Member/Officer Protocol, which forms part of the Constitution, be noted.

9. Authority Meeting Dates For 2019-20 & 2020-21

Members considered Report CFO/029/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the draft dates for Authority Committee meetings and events for 2019/20; and the draft provisional dates for 2020/21.

Members were informed that occasionally, minor changes need to be made to meeting dates within the year.

They were also advised that once approved, the usual laminated “pocket guides” would be produced and provided to Members.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The schedule of meeting dates and events for 2019/20 (attached at Appendix A and provisionally agreed at the Annual General Meeting on 14th June 2018), be confirmed.
- b) The draft provisional dates for 2020/21 (attached at Appendix B), be noted.

10. Members Allowance Payments 2018/19

Members considered Report CFO/032/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning payments made to Members in the form of allowances, during the financial year 2018/19.

Cllr Makinson advised that within the table attached as Appendix A to the report, it shows a payment of £25.00, within the “Subsistence” column. However this payment was for the reimbursement of travel, not subsistence; and should therefore be contained within the “Travel” column.

Members Resolved that:

With the amendment outlined above, the information contained within the report and at Appendix A, be noted.

11. Scheme of Members Allowances 2019/20

Members considered Report CFO/030/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning a review of the current Scheme of Members’ Allowances; and recommendations on any changes it wishes to make to the Scheme.

The Chair of the Authority advised Members of the intention to reduce the number of Special Responsibility Allowances paid to Lead Members, by two, but

revert back to having two Vice-Chairs, who will each Chair the two main Committees.

He advised that the changes had been discussed with the Director of Finance, who had confirmed that the small difference in allowances could be absorbed within existing budgets.

Cllr Lesley Rennie advised that in relation to the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the Opposition Spokesperson, as there was only one such payment; and both Opposition Parties now have two Members, the intention is for the allowance to be split between the two Opposition Parties.

Members Resolved that:

- a. The current Members' Allowance Scheme, continue.
- b. Any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances, be noted as being aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay.
- c. The decision of the Authority at its Budget meeting on 23rd February 2019 to freeze all 2018/19 member allowances for the tenth consecutive year, be noted.
- d. The intention of the Authority to reject any pay increases in line with Firefighters Pay Award for 2019/20, which would apply to 2020/21 allowances, be confirmed.
- e. Continuation of the combined roles of Co-opted Member and Independent Person, be confirmed, with the individual:
 - i. Being appointed to both the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee.
 - ii. Continuing to consider any complaints against Members, alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct as "Independent Person";
 - iii. Being paid for conducting such roles following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £50 (as and when required) as is the current case.

12. Questions on Discharge of Functions

Members considered Report CFO/028/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the nomination of Members from each of the five constituent District Councils, as the Members responsible for answering questions in their Council on the discharge of the functions of the Authority.

Members Resolved that:

The following Members be appointed by the Authority as the Members responsible for answering questions in their respective Councils, on the discharge of the function of the Authority for 2019/20:

- Cllr Les Byrom Sefton Council
- Cllr James Roberts Liverpool City Council
- Cllr Steff O’Keeffe Knowsley Council
- Cllr Brian Kenny Wirral Council
- Cllr Lisa Preston St. Helens Council

13. Appointment of Members to Outside Bodies

Members considered Report CFO/033/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the outside organisations to which the Authority is currently affiliated; and to request, where appropriate, confirmation of continuing affiliation for 2019/20 and the appointment of representatives to those organisations.

The Chair of the Authority informed Members that the Membership of the LGA Fire Services Commission, comprises of the Chair and Vice-Chairs. The North West Fire & Rescue Advisory Forum, comprises of the Chair, Vice-Chairs and an Opposition Member. However, meetings of the forum are open to other Members to attend if they so wish in an observer capacity.

He also advised that the Association of Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities is represented by the Chair of the Authority.

With regards to North West Employers Organisation, the Chair of the Authority advised Members that Cllr James Roberts was prepared to be the Authority’s representative, unless any other Member was interested in doing so. Likewise with the Local European Issues Forum (formally Merseyside Brussels Office). Cllr James Roberts had confirmed that he would be the Authority’s representative, unless any other Member wished to be.

With regards to the Liverpool City Region LEP, Members were advised that at present, the Authority is represented by a Senior Officer, however the Authority are looking into the possibility of Member representation as well.

The Chair also advised that in relation to the Merseyside Community Safety Partnership, the Authority is currently exploring representation; and would nominate a representative at a future point.

Members Resolved that:

- (a) Continuation of affiliation with the following organisations and the appointment of the following Members to those organisations, be approved:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Representative Member</u>
Local Government Association Fire Services Commission	Cllrs Les Byrom, Brian Kenny & James Roberts
North West Employers Organisation	Cllr James Roberts
North West Fire and Rescue Advisory Forum	Cllrs Les Byrom, Brian Kenny, James Roberts and Lesley Rennie
Association of Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities	Cllrs Les Byrom
Local European Issues Forum (formally Merseyside Brussels Office)	Cllr James Roberts

- b) The appointment of a Member to the Liverpool City Region LEP, continue to be explored.
- c) A Member appointment to the Merseyside Community Safety Partnership, continue to be explored.

14. Approved Conferences and Outside Meetings

Members considered Report CFO/031/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning attendance at conferences and outside meetings by representatives of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, to be determined by the Chair of the Authority.

The Chair of the Authority advised Members that there is a budget for Members conference attendance. Therefore, if they were interested in attending any conference or event relevant to their MFRA Role, they were to inform the Chair to provide approval, so long as costs could be contained within the allocated budget

Members Resolved that:

Attendance at conferences and outside meetings by representatives of Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority, to be determined by the Chair of the Authority, be confirmed and approved.

15. Meetings with National Politicians at Party Political Conferences

Members considered Report CFO/027/19 of the Monitoring Officer, concerning the attendance of Members at meetings held at the location of party political conferences, in order to make Authority related representations in line with the Members Scheme of Allowances.

The Chair of the Authority commented that this is not something that has been taken up in recent years, but proposed that the provision remain for the time being.

Members Resolved that:

- a. The attendance of appropriate representatives of the political groups of the Authority with Ministers, Opposition Spokespersons and other relevant national politicians, to be held at the location of their own party political conferences, to discuss issues relating to the business of the Authority, be approved.
- b. The payment of appropriate travel and subsistence expenses for such meetings, be approved , but confirmed that no payment of conference fees be made by MFRA:
- c. Members attending such meetings, report back to the Authority regarding issues raised and responses; and progress on information received.

16. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2020, Functional Priorities 2018/19, Quarter 3 & Quarter4 update

Members considered Report CFO/025/19 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning an update on:

- (a) The agreed Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (E,D&I) Action Plan for 2018/19 Quarters 3 and 4.
- (b) The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Objectives for 2018/19, as at 31st March 2019.

Members were provided with a detailed overview of the report; and for the benefit of newly appointed Members, some background information regarding the introduction of an Equality and Diversity Action Plan, to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion became embedded across the organisation.

Members were informed that the progress to date against the current 3 year Action Plan – 2017 - 2020, was detailed within Appendix A to the report. They were advised that progress has been made against all but one of the actions, which has subsequently been removed due to no longer being relevant; and some specific actions were highlighted to Members.

Members were advised that our work with faith communities, has enabled us to build relationships; and has been mutually beneficial with regards to ensuring access to communities.

In relation to work around knowing our communities, it was highlighted to Members that this has enabled MFRA to ensure that they are receiving the right information and data to enable us to target our resources effectively.

With regards to tension monitoring, Members were advised that following the terror attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, members of the Arson Team and Home Safety Advocates visited several Mosques across Merseyside, to provide re-assurance.

Members were also informed that all of our Community Fire Stations are Safe Haven's; and have defibrillators available and accessible to the community.

Further areas highlighted, were around our work internally with staff, to develop and expand our staff networks; and the appointment of an Equality and Diversity Advisor, to provide training to our staff, to ensure that they are equipped to work within our communities.

Members were then provided with an overview of Appendix B to the report, which details progress against Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives for year 2.

Members were advised that Objective 1 is around the diversity of the organisation as a whole, with information broken down by various role type. It was highlighted that improvements have been made across all areas with regards to increasing diversity.

Objective 2 is around ensuring that people from diverse communities receive equitable services that meet their needs. Members were advised of the need to ensure that we are reaching all communities through the delivery of HFSC's; and it was highlighted that as part of the consultation around the alternative Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) proposals, views were sought on tackling issues around socio-economic disadvantage. Members were informed that there are real pockets of deprivation across Merseyside; and although the HFSC strategy has focused around individuals over the age of 65, there are a significant number of fires occurring within areas with the highest level of deprivation, which have a significant impact on those communities. Therefore, consideration is being given as to whether more resources should be targeted towards areas of high deprivation.

Information regarding young people attending MFRA Youth Engagement programmes, was also highlighted to Members.

With regards to Objective 3 around reducing fires and other incidents amongst the vulnerable protected groups, it was re-iterated to Members that previously, the focus has been around targeting individuals over the age of 65. However, there also needs to be a focus around deprivation.

In relation to Objective 4 around ensuring that staff are equipped to deliver their roles, Members were informed that this is re-enforced by the recruitment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisor, who will be delivering training to all employees, as well as Authority Members.

Members were informed that Objective 5 is around achieving and maintaining excellence against a Fire & Rescue Service Equality Framework, with MFRA committed to continue its positive work around the E,D&I agenda.

The Chair of the Authority advised Members that they all have a personal responsibility for E,D&I, which is taken very seriously amongst leading authorities.

Questions were raised by Members around the results of the most recent staff survey, in particular the greatest declines being around MFRA being a better place to work than it was 3 years ago; and around change management.

Members were informed that there were no surprises in relation to the staff survey outcomes; with issues around culture being replicated across the sector; and forming a focus of the first tranche of HMICFRS Inspections. They were also informed that creating an organisation that is more reflective of the communities we serve, is work in progress; and that Officers would be happy for Members to scrutinise this in more detail if they so wished.

The Chair of the Authority commented that the Station Visits are a good opportunity to hear from frontline staff and to have discussions around cultural issues. He also commented that morale across all local authorities is pretty low at present.

Further questions were raised by Members in relation to female recruitment and retention; and the potential impact of duty systems on this.

Members were advised that as the fire and rescue service is an emergency service, required 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, ultimately, we require firefighters in place to do their role. This can create some challenges in terms of managing the impact of duty system changes on staff. Members were provided with a brief explanation of the duty systems; and it was highlighted that the day crewing duty system introduced recently, has a positive organisational impact, as it provides individuals with more options.

Members were advised that we do have policies and procedures in place for dealing with individual circumstances, such as carer responsibilities; and exploring flexible working options.

A further question was raised by Members with regards to the gender pay gap; and what steps are being taken to reduce the gap.

Members were advised that it is an historic position. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the first female firefighter within MFRA, was on the recruit course before his, following which, there was a significant reduction in recruitment for many years. This has limited the opportunity to increase the numbers of female

firefighters into the organisation. In addition, the position is exasperated by the fact that firefighters are generally better paid than support staff; and as the majority of firefighters are male, the gap is increased further. However, it was clarified to Members that there is no differential between pay for the same role. Members were also informed that as we are now recruiting again and have been doing so for a few years, we are actively trying to diversify the workforce, which should hopefully help to start reducing the gap.

Members were also informed that there is still a challenge around the progression of female firefighters; and ensuring that they feel able to progress up the organisation, giving females the same aspirations as males.

Members Resolved that:

The content of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion progress report and progress against the Equality Objectives, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Wednesday, 3 July 2019

Signed: _____

Date: _____