

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2017

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Jean Stapleton (Chair) Councillors Marianne Welsh, Denise Allen, Peter Brennan, Janet Grace, Brian Kenny, Chris Meaden and Paul Tweed

Apologies:

7. Chairs Announcement

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair confirmed to all present that the proceedings of the meeting would not be recorded.

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) the following item of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information:

- **Agenda Item 6 – “Award of Regional Contract for Fire Helmets”**

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Community Safety & Protection Committee held on 6th October 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that in relation to Agenda Item 5 on the Minutes of the previous meeting, regarding “The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme”, the Authority have now been successful in achieving the Silver Award in addition to the Bronze Award.

Regarding Agenda Item 6 on the Minutes - "Safe & Well Pilot Scheme", Members were advised that a Learning Lunch had been delivered prior to this meeting, updating Members on the Safe & Well pilot scheme. Therefore, the action contained within the Minutes to report back on the results of the Safe and Well Pilot Scheme, had now been discharged.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE APR-JUNE 2017

Members considered Report CFO/055/17 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning performance against the Service objectives and the performance targets/outcomes, as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2017/18 for the period April to June 2017.

The report covered the period 1st April to 30th June 2017 (1st quarter) and included highlights from Functional Delivery Plan actions and Benchmark/Summary Performance Indicators.

Jackie Sutton – IRMP Officer, provided Members with a presentation in support of the report.

Members were informed that there are 56 Functional Plan action points, some of which have been carried over from last year. So far one action has been complete.

With regards to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), most incident types have seen an increase during the first quarter, with a particularly high number of Secondary fires in May, which may be attributable to school holidays, light nights and warmer weather.

With regards to performance against our attendance standard, Members were advised that the standard has been consistently achieved throughout the first quarter.

In relation to the number of shifts lost to sickness absence, Members were advised that performance has been within target, however there was a spike in sickness absence amongst non-uniformed staff throughout June. This was predominantly due to the number of individuals off on long-term sickness absence during that month, with the number reducing during July.

Members were informed that the number of accidental dwelling fires have decreased this year compared with the same period last year, as have the number of deliberate fires. It was also noted that there have been no fire deaths so far this year.

The number of Road Traffic Collisions have fallen, with 27 less than at this time last year and 15 under target. The only district within which the target was exceeded was Knowsley, with 17 Road Traffic Collisions against a target of 11. Injuries in Road Traffic Collisions have also decreased, with 47 less injuries than last year; and no fatalities.

With regards to KPI's within 10% of target, the total number of incidents for the period was 4285, which is 417 more incidents attended than in Quarter 1 last year. This is due to a general increase in most incident types. The total number of Primary Fires and Secondary Fires, along with Carbon Output are all KPI's which are above, but within 10% of their target.

KPI's for which targets were not met, included deliberate fires in non-domestic premises, deliberate vehicle fires; and accidental small fires attended. Other KPI's for which the target was not met included Special Service calls attended (however this also includes Emergency Medical Response calls); and the number of false alarms attended. However, in relation to false alarms, it was noted that a large proportion of these calls were good intent.

During the first quarter, Operational staff completed 11075 Home Fire Safety Checks. Over 55% of these were identified as being delivered to individuals over the age of 65. Prevention Officers completed 2190 high risk home safety visits this year, which is 364 more than in 2016/17. A total of 13577 Home Fire Safety Checks were completed in total during the period.

Members were also informed that Emergency Medical Response was trialled between April 2016 and June 2017; and during this period, North West Ambulance Service made 281 requests and attendance was actually made on 193 occasions.

Discussion took place around inspections in high rise buildings within Merseyside and Members were informed that all buildings with cladding had been inspected. Members were advised that fire safety campaigns were being undertaken by staff, focusing on general fire precautions within high rise buildings; and that remedial action had been taken within a significant proportion of high rise premises visited, although none had warranted a decant. In addition to high rise residential buildings, Members were also advised that a number of other high rise premises, such as hospitals and schools, had also been considered based on risk.

Further discussion took place regarding "stay put" advice. Members were informed that "Stay Put" policies are the policies of housing providers, however a more holistic response will be considered nationally through the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC), who will look to influence future policy in this regard.

Members were also advised that over the last 3 months, there has been a real focus with regards to high rise premises, with staff going above and beyond in their work commitments, to ensure the communities of Merseyside remain as safe as possible.

Members requested some further information regarding the rationale for ending the trial of 24hr shifts. Members were informed that there are a number of duty systems in operation at present, including the default 12 hour 2-2-4 system, Low Level of Activity and Risk (LLAR), day crewing and the trial of 24 hours. Although the 24 hour shifts have been popular with staff due to the compression of hours, it has been recognised that there is a risk of fatigue for staff, especially during protracted incidents where staff may be in attendance at an incident for

in excess of 14 hours out of a 24 hour shift. This would result in an increased stand-down period being required, which is non-productive. Therefore, although it is acknowledged that the shift system has helped to reduce sickness absence, there are other duty systems which are more productive, with a reduced fatigue risk.

Members were also advised that a Working Party had been established, comprising of management and representative bodies; and that the Working Party had collectively agreed to cease the 24 hour shift trial. During the transition period back to the default 12 hour 2-2-4 shift system, Members were informed that the stand down period on 24 hour shifts would be increased.

Further questions were raised regarding the meaning of “bow tie” methodology; and unconscious bias, with explanations provided.

Members resolved that:

The attached reports be approved for publication on the Authority’s Website.

4. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Members considered report CFO/062/17 of the Treasurer, concerning the current arrangements for the Authority’s external auditor that will end in 2017/18. Members approved the use of the LGA’s Public Sector Auditor Appointment Limited (PSAA) as the Authority’s ‘appointing person’ for external audit services for 2018/19 and future years (CFO/009/17). This report advises Members of the outcome of the PSAA procurement exercise and proposal to appoint Grant Thornton (existing Auditor) as MFRA auditor for five years from 2018/19.

Members were provided with an overview of the report and were briefed on the recommendation to appoint Grant Thornton as MFRA’s external auditor for 2018/19-2022/23.

Members resolved that:

- a) the appointment of Grant Thornton UK LLP (‘Grant Thornton’) as Auditor for MFRA for 2018/19 to 2022/23, be approved; and
- b) the Authority respond accordingly to the PSAA consultation (deadline 22nd September 2017), confirming its satisfaction with the outcome.

5. MANAGEMENT OF ROAD RISK - IMPACT OF THE 2017 FINANCE ACT

Members considered report CFO/063/17 of the Chief Fire Officer, informing them of the impact of the Finance Act 2017 on the current operational flexi duty staff lease car arrangements, and the potential need to consider alternative vehicle arrangements in order to manage the road risk for senior officers when responding under blue lights.

Members were provided with a brief overview of the report, informing them that before the introduction of the Finance Act 2017, an individual’s “cashable

benefit in kind” calculation required by HMRC, was reduced by the percentage of business miles to total miles driven in a financial year. The Fire and Rescue Service nationally was informed in July 2017 via a tax consultant firm that the Finance Act 2017 had removed the option to reduce the tax burden on any individual who uses an Emergency Service Vehicle for private mileage and that an individual must now pay tax on the Gross Cashable Benefit Figure.

Members were informed that a small working group has been established to develop and consider alternative vehicle options; and a further report will be brought to the Authority at the meeting on 19th October 2017.

Members resolved that:

- a. the impact of the Finance Act 2017 on the current operational lease car scheme, be noted; and
- b. a further report be brought back to the Authority following consultation with staff and where applicable their representatives, on the alternative options available to the Authority for the provision of vehicles.

6. Award of Regional Contract For Fire Helmets

Members considered report CFO/056/17 of the Chief Fire Officer, advising them of the outcome of the North West tender process for the replacement of fire helmets, and to request approval to award the contract to the preferred bidder.

Members were informed that although there is a real focus at present around national procurement, the North West tender process has secured a much better deal with regards to the procurement of fire helmets, than that achieved through the national procurement exercise, undertaken by Kent Fire & Rescue Authority.

Members were also advised that staff have been engaged and consulted around the products considered, to ensure their views were taken into account.

Members resolved that:

- a. the outcome of the tender process be noted.
- b. the award of the contract to the successful bidder, be agreed.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 1 February 2018

Signed: _____

Date: _____