

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>13 JUNE 2017</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/040/17</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>JANET HENSHAW</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>PROPOSED REFORM OF MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>		
<b>APPENDICES:</b>			

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of proposals to reform Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) and undertake consultation with elected members of MFRA, the 4 District Council Leaders, the Mayor of Liverpool and the newly elected Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.

### **Recommendation**

2. That Members;
  - a. Approve in principle the reforms proposed to MFRA to take effect from the Annual meeting in June 2018 as outlined in paragraphs 4 to 18 of this report and
  - b. Approve the establishment of a small working group of Members and the Monitoring Officer to add further detail to the proposal to be presented to the Authority before December 2017 and
  - c. Note, subject to approval of Recommendation (a) above, that the principles of reform will be discussed with the newly elected Metro Mayor and the Combined Authority of the Liverpool City Region (although these plans do not at this stage include the borough of Halton)

### **Introduction and Background**

3. Members will be aware that the Cities and Devolution Act 2016 provides for an elected Metro Mayor of a Combined Authority in any area and that the elected Metro Mayor, following the devolution of the necessary powers may assume the functions of another public authority, i.e. Fire and Rescue Authorities and that of the Police and Crime Commissioner in the area.
4. Members will recall the consultation held by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority over the extent of devolved powers to be sought from

Government through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority 'ask'. A report was presented to the MFRA Policy and Resources Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (CFO/081/15) where Members resolved that the arrangements proposed for the governance of the Fire and Rescue Service in Greater Manchester would be the preference of the Authority.

5. The position in Greater Manchester is that responsibility for the governance of the Fire and Rescue Service transferred to the Metro Mayor with effect from 8<sup>th</sup> May. This responsibility extends to setting the budget, agreeing the Integrated Management Plan and appointing the Chief Fire Officer. The operational delivery of the Service is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer. Political oversight on behalf of the Mayor is proposed to be delivered through a Committee of Councillors with one each returned from each the 10 Local Authority areas supplemented by a number of Mayoral appointees to ensure appropriate representation. These arrangements are subject to ratification and should be known at the time of this Committee.
6. The Metro Mayor for the Liverpool City Region was elected on 4<sup>th</sup> May.
7. It may be some time before responsibility for the governance of the Fire and Rescue Service transitions to the Metro Mayor in Merseyside. However planning now for this eventuality, by reforming the Authority and reducing its membership, will ensure that MFRA is able to effect a seamless transfer at such time as it is necessary. In addition it will contribute to the savings required of the Authority in the next financial year and in future years.

#### **Nominations from District Councils**

8. Currently MFRA comprised eighteen elected Members, nominated by the five constituent District Councils of Merseyside. The table below shows the numbers of Members currently nominated from each District Council:

Liverpool	Sefton	Wirral	St. Helens	Knowsley
6	4	4	2	2

9. It is proposed to reduce this number to 9 members and the table below reflects what this would mean in terms of numbers of nominations from District Councils.

Liverpool	Sefton	Wirral	St. Helens	Knowsley
3	2	2	1	1

#### **Current Committee Structures as of 2017/18**

10. The current Committee Structure of MFRA consists of:
  - The Authority which meets 5 times a year (including the AGM and Budget Authority meetings)

- The Policy and Resources Committee (which meets three to four times a year)
- The Community Safety and Protection Committee (which meets three to four times a year)
- The Audit and Scrutiny Sub Committee (encompassing Standards Committee and which meets three times a year)
- The Fire and Police Committee (which is not a decision making Committee and meets three times a year as necessary)

### **Proposed New Committee Structure as of June 2018**

11. It is proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee and the Community Safety and Protection Committee are replaced by one single Finance and General Purposes Committee.
12. The full Authority would meet at a minimum twice a year, the Finance and General Purposes Committee twice a year and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee twice a year. The Fire and Police Committee would meet as and when required.
13. There is also provision in the Authority's Constitution for a Committee of not less than three voting members to be established if necessary for any urgent business under Standing Order 17.2. Under these circumstances no further Committees would be required.

### **Lead Members and Vice Chairs**

14. Currently there are two Vice Chairs of the Authority, 6 Lead Members and 2 Member Ambassador.
15. It is proposed that, if a total Authority membership of nine members were approved, there would be one Vice Chair of the Authority, Chair of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee and six Lead Members.
16. It should be noted that the Authority has agreed a freeze on Members' allowances for the sixth consecutive year. However, should these changes be agreed then special responsibility allowance payments will also be considered by the working party
17. It is proposed to continue the membership of the Independent Person who sits on the Audit and Scrutiny Sub Committee and would also be required in respect of any standards issues.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner**

18. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 contains provision which would allow the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to be invited on to the Authority as a voting member under what is known as the 'Representation Model'. Members will need to consider if they wish to extend such an invitation to the PCC.
19. Members are asked to consider these proposals and suggest any amendments prior to them being formally discussed with District Council Leaders and the Metro Mayor. Any comments or feedback from Members, District leaders and the Metro Mayor will be presented to the working group for their consideration. A report will be presented to the Authority for final approval.

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### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

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20. Members are nominated annually by their respective District Council to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority following any election in line with the political proportionality in each Local Authority area.

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### **Staff Implications**

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21. There would be a reduced workload for some officers however a Democratic Services Team of two officers would still to be required to service the reformed Authority.

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### **Legal Implications**

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22. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 section 15 provides for Principal Council to apply Political balance on Committees and those bodies to whom it nominates. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority is such a body for these purposes as provided by Schedule 1(2)(1)(a) of the LGHA 1989.

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### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

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23. If the recommendation in this report is approved then the combined proposals would deliver a saving of £102,896.00 per annum which would contribute to future saving challenges or the protection of front line services.

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### **Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

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24. There are no direct risk management, health and safety or environmental implications contained within this report.

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Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

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25. The Authority would continue to operate to support the communities of Merseyside and the savings identified would assist the front line providing valuable services to these communities.

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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**CFO/11/11** If this report follows on from another, list the previous report(s)

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**