

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

3 SEPTEMBER 2013

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Les Byrom, Linda Maloney, Vi Bebb, Andrew Blackburn, Ted Grannell, John Kelly, Jimmy Mahon, Pat Moloney, Barbara Murray, Tony Newman, Lesley Rennie, Denise Roberts, Jean Stapleton and Sharon Sullivan

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Dave Hanratty (Chair), Cllr Robbie Ayres, Cllr Roy Gladden and Cllr Steve Niblock

CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the opening of the meeting, the Chair made the following announcements:

- Members were informed of the funeral which had taken place that morning of Firefighter Steve Hunt of Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service.

The Chair asked all present to rise for a moments silence, in remembrance of FF Hunt.

- The Chair then welcomed Mr Ian Parkinson and Mr Anthony Boyle, applicants for Co-Opted Member and Independent Person respectively, who were in attendance in relation to Agenda Item 4.
- Members were also informed that following the written Ministerial Statement by Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis MP (and in response to consultation), to move the date of the English local Elections in 2014 to the same day as the European Elections, being 22nd May 2014, it has now been confirmed by the District Councils of Merseyside that their Annual General Meetings have been moved to later dates. As a result, MFRA are required to move the date of its AGM, to allow sufficient time for Councils to appoint Members to MFRA.

Therefore it was agreed that the **AGM for MFRA be moved from 12th June 2014, to Thursday 3rd July 2014.**

It was also agreed that, as a result of this change, the **Authority Meeting scheduled for 26th June 2014, be cancelled.**

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) the following items on the Agenda were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency:
 - **Item 10 - Outcomes Of The Resolution Advisory Panel**
This item was agreed to be considered as a matter of urgency, due to the timing of - the Panel Meeting; and receipt of the Independent Chair's recommendations.
 - **Item 11 – Industrial Action Planning (in support of Verbal Update on Outcome of National FBU Ballot)**
This item was agreed to be considered as a matter of urgency, due to the close date of the ballot; and the outcome of the ballot.
- c) the following items required the exclusion of the press and public due to the disclosure of exempt information:
 - **Item 12 – MFRA Public & Private Partnership Venture**

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the authority, held on 27th June 2013, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. **Minutes of the Member Development Group 13 Aug 2013**

Members considered the Minutes of the last meeting of the Member Development Group, held on 13th August 2013 and the recommendations contained therein.

Members Resolved that:

The following recommendations contained within the Minutes of the Member Development Group on 13th August 2013, be approved:

- a) A Learning Lunch be provided to Members on 19th November 2013, demonstrating the Portal and highlighting what information can be accessed through it.

- b) During the Learning Lunch, Members be asked to consider the type of information they would like to access through the Portal; and indicate their potential use of the Portal, in order to guide future developments.
- c) Once the new Members Room has been completed as part of the JCC Project, "Clinic Days" be arranged for Members to drop in for a tutorial on how to use, access information; and navigate their way around the Portal. Members of staff from the Portal Team and the ICT Team are to be available for these tutorials.
- d) The Authority encourage Members to complete feedback forms following their attendance at conferences and event.
- e) The feedback form used, be amended to include details concerning the cost of attendance at the event, including travelling and subsistence costs etc...
- f) The amended form and any feedback received from Members following attendance at events, be reported back to the next meeting of the Member Development Group.
- g) A Report concerning feedback received throughout the year, be submitted annually to the last Authority Meeting prior to the AGM, to enable full consideration of the value of future attendance, prior to the Authority approving conferences and events for the following Municipal year.
- h) Wherever possible, only one topic be covered in any "Learning Lunch" slot.
- i) The Authority continue with the schedule of set days for Members station visits.
- j) Invites to station visits continue to be open to all Members, however note that due to the space available within many stations, it may be beneficial to have only approximately 8 Members in attendance.
- k) A Report be submitted to the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee on 26th September 2013, regarding the provision of training for staff; and the associated savings in providing more training internally.
- l) The Organisational Development Manager look into the possibility of Members participating in any ICT Training run for staff.
- m) Following Members one-to-one meetings and the development of training plans, the most appropriate accreditation methods be looked into.
- n) Members of the Member Development Group, each undertake a 360 degree appraisal, as a trial for the Authority to consider rolling out to all Members.

- o) The Organisational Development Manager liaise with other local authorities, to establish how they are accrediting Members and whether there is any scope/ appetite for providing learning and accreditation jointly.
- p) Arrangements be made for all Members to meet with the Organisation Development Manager for a one-to-one development meeting, before the end of February 2014.
- q) Following completion of all one-to-one's analysis be conducted to establish training needs; and those needs be met within a realistic timeframe.
- r) Following completion and analysis of all Members one-to-one's, accreditation options be looked into.
- s) Minutes of the Member Development Group, be submitted to full Authority Meetings for Members information and for recommendations to be approved.

4. Appointment Of Co-Opted Member And Independent Person

(CFO/099/13)

Members considered Report CFO/099/13 of the Clerk to the Authority, concerning the recommendations of the Interview Panel in relation to the proposed candidates for appointment to the roles of Co-Opted Member and Independent Person.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The recommendation of the interview panel in relation to the appointment of an Independent Person, be noted.
- b) The appointment of Mr Anthony Boyle as Independent Person, subject to satisfactory references, be confirmed.
- c) The recommendation of the interview panel in relation to the appointment of a Co-Opted Member, be noted.
- d) The appointment of Mr Ian Parkinson to the position of Co-Opted Member of the Authority, subject to satisfactory references, be confirmed.

5. Staff Travel Plan - Feedback from Task & Finish Group

(CFO/086/13)

Members considered Report CFO/ 086/13 of the Clerk to the Authority on behalf of the Task & Finish Group, concerning feedback from the Task & Finish Group established to scrutinise staff travel plans.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The feedback from the Task & Finish Group regarding the Travel Plan, be noted.
- b) The site specific travel plans for the Joint Control Centre and the Toxteth Firefit Hub (including Toxteth Fire Station), be endorsed.
- c) The following actions be approved:
 - i) That officers consider environmental implications at the point of recruitment or transfer of staff, or at the point of other employee related policy development.
 - ii) That officers consider a system whereby information about availability of pool vehicles can be provided to all staff.
 - iii) That officers develop such systems incorporating a travel hierarchy and the feasibility of other forms of transport and/ or the possibility of using pool cars and pool bikes.
 - iv) That officers liaise with partner organisations in the area about sharing travel arrangements (e.g a work bus) in order to put forward any viable business plan to Mersey Travel.
 - v) That officers consider when any review of the current lease car scheme takes place, the environmental implications of any future scheme.
 - vi) That the targets outlined in Appendix C to the report, for staff modes of travel, are adopted by the Authority and that any campaigns aimed at achievement of such targets are supported by the Authority.
 - vii) Regular surveys of staff travel be undertaken to monitor progress against these targets and review them where necessary.
- d) Their thanks be placed on record to all Members and Officers involved in the Task & Finish Group.

6. MFRA Response To Liverpool City Region Governance Review

(CFO/106/13)

Members considered Report CFO/106/13 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the proposed response to the Liverpool City Region governance review consultation exercise.

Members discussed the proposed response in detail, with several Members highlighting a number of concerns that they have regarding the proposals for a Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Following debate, Members voted on whether to approve the proposed response to the consultation.

The result of the vote was as follows:

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| For | 12 |
| Against | 2 |
| Abstained | 0 |

The recommendation was carried.

Members Resolved that:

The proposed response to the Liverpool City Region governance review consultation, be approved for submission by the deadline of 6th September 2013.

7. Local Government Financial Settlement 2014/15 and 2015/16 - Technical Consultation

(CFO/105/13)

Members considered Report CFO/105/13 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning a technical consultation paper on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16 which was released by the Government on 25th July 2013.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The report and the initial draft response, be noted.
- b) The Deputy Chief Executive be requested to finalise the response in consultation with the Chair, taking account of any comments from AMFRA, CFOA, LGA and the Merseyside Districts.
- c) That the response be circulated electronically to all Members for comment, prior to being submitted.

8. Impact Of The Government Finance Announcement

(CFO/103/13)

Members considered Report CFO/103/13 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning the Government announcement regarding the level of grant it will provide to the Authority for the financial years of 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Members resolved that the content of the report; and the implications on Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and the services it provides, be noted.

9. A Strategic Overview Of Estates - Identification Of Key Priorities

(CFO/102/13)

Members considered Report CFO/102/13 of the Deputy Chief Executive, concerning a review of the property portfolio of the Authority and recommendations for savings in light of the forecast significant reductions in funding.

Members discussed the report in detail and sought clarity regarding the recommendations.

Officers confirmed that Members were not being asked to make any decisions at this moment in time regarding station mergers, but were being asked to grant permission for officers to look into options in order to bring back detailed proposals for the Authority's consideration at a later stage.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The content of the report be noted.
- b) The following recommendations, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved:
 - l) The Authority identify strategic mergers that allow operational response to be maintained, whilst improving community and firefighter facilities and reducing costs.

Having assessed the location of the newer stations and the operational response needs of the service, the Chief Fire Officer has identified that the two key geographic options where strategic mergers should be considered following consultation are:

- a) Wirral:

Merging West Kirby and Upton to create a much improved station with extensive community facilities at Greasby, which would allow operational standards to be maintained whilst improving the capability for community partnerships.

In addition, consideration might be given to the opportunities for the future development of Heswall. This site is commercially attractive and working with private/ public partners may create opportunities to improve facilities or relocate services.

b) St.Helens and Knowsley:

Members have already approved in principle, the working up of a feasibility study for the mergers of Huyton and Whiston fire stations at Prescott. There are a number of merger options to be considered across St. Helens and Knowsley, including Huyton/ Whiston, St.Helens/ Eccleston or Whiston/ Eccleston.

- II) The Chief Fire Officer report back with detailed proposals on how to take the above recommendation forward.
- III) For all stations, the aim should be to encourage partners to create community hubs and to share costs, reduce wasted space and provide better facilities. Reserves should be used for invest to save schemes which deliver long term revenue streams from partners.
- IV) The Authority should sensibly invest in small scale works that would improve firefighter and community facilities at older stations in the short-term. £0.5m of the capital investment reserve should be set aside to support these works.
- V) The Chief Fire Officer review the facilities at the TDA and report in full on what improvements and investments are required to ensure firefighter safety.
- VI) Note the following key projects that are being progressed:
 - Improvements to the LLAR accommodation facilities at Newton and Formby Fire Stations, where additional land has been acquired and accommodation blocks will be built.
 - The new Joint Command and Control Centre with Merseyside Police (including the refurbishment of HQ and the development of a new secondary MACC). This is a major multi million pound project and much of the focus of estates and other support teams will be on the delivery of this by the target date of May 2014.
- VII) Note the following mid scale projects that are planned:
 - Replacement of diesel tanks
 - 5 year electrical testing
 - Upton Training Tower
 - Kensington Training Tower

- Demolition of Claires Building at Liverpool City Community Fire Station.

10. Shift Change Negotiation Update - Resolution Advisory Panel Outcomes

(CFO/108/13)

Members considered Report CFO/108/13 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the outcomes of the Resolution Advisory Panel (RAP) held on 19th August 2013; and the recommendations made in relation to the proposal to move to a 12/12 default duty system by the Independent Chair.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that both parties accepted the recommendations of the Independent Chair, however both parties also noted the unnecessary disruption that two changes in duty system within a relatively short period of time, would have on staff. Therefore, Members were updated on negotiations to introduce the move to the 12/12 default duty system by 1st January 2014.

Members Resolved that:

- a) That the outcome of the RAP, be noted.
- b) The continued commitment of the Chief Fire Officer and the Fire Brigades Union, to achieve a negotiated settlement that meets the operational needs of the Authority and the aspirations of employees, be noted.
- c) The thanks and appreciation of the Authority, be conveyed to all individuals involved in the negotiations.

11. Verbal Update - Outcome Of National FBU Ballot Regarding Pensions

(CFO/110/13)

Members considered a verbal update from the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the outcome of the national FBU ballot regarding pensions; and supporting Report CFO/110/13 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the planning undertaken in preparation for industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union.

Members were informed that the ballot for industrial action, concluded on 29th August 2013 with a "yes" vote. They were informed that as yet, strike dates have not been announced, however the Fire Brigades Union has 7 days to inform the Authority of strike dates, and there is a total of 28 days in which strike action must be taken.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The fact that the FBU will take industrial action on dates yet to be announced, be noted.

- b) The resilience arrangements in place to ensure that the Authority continues to meet its statutory duties, be approved.
- c) The application of the Authority's established policies and arrangements in relation to any industrial action (including those pension issues described in the financial implications of the report), be confirmed.

12. MFRA Public And Private Partnership Venture

(CFO/104/13)

The Minutes of this Item contain EXEMPT information by virtue of Paragraph 3 to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 22 October 2013

Signed: _____

Date: _____