

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

3 SEPTEMBER 2019

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Brian Kenny, Doreen Knight, Emily Spurrell, Del Arnall, Janet Grace, Linda Maloney, Lynne Thompson, Les Byrom and Lesley Rennie

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Paul Tweed and Cllr Bruce Berry

6. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 not be filmed on this occasion, as there were no members of the press or public in attendance.

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) The following declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to items of business on the Agenda:
 - Cllr Linda Maloney declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 4 – “*New St. Helens Fire Station – Additional Fourth Bay*”, due to being appointed to the Planning Committee within St. Helens Council.
This was noted and Cllr Maloney was advised accordingly.
- 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 contained exempt information, by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

- Appendix A to Agenda Item 5 – “*The Supply of Eleven Type B Pumping Appliances*”

Members were advised that should any discussion be required around the content of that Appendix, the press and public would need to be excluded prior to discussion, due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 11th April 2019, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2019-20 APRIL-JUNE REPORT

Members considered Report CFO/048/19 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning scrutiny of performance against the objectives and the performance targets/outcomes, as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2019/20, for the period April to June 2019.

Members were provided with a presentation in support of this report by Jackie Sutton – Integrated Risk Management Planning Officer.

Members were informed that the report provides Members with an opportunity to scrutinise performance; and includes highlights from Functional Delivery Plan actions and high level, Summary Performance Indicators.

They were also informed that Functional Delivery Plans are produced by each function, with key actions incorporated into the Service Delivery Plan. They were advised that Functional Plan key deliverables also now include actions contained within the recently approved IRMP Supplement and HMICFRS Inspection Report.

It was highlighted to Members, that progress reporting within the report, follows a “RAG” system. They were informed that although it is still early, some sub-actions of the key deliverables, have already been completed. For example, cross border risk information has been successfully shared with partners and is available on the Portal and Mobile Data Terminals (MDT’s); and the Positive Action Strategy is now fully implemented and resourced, to ensure diversity across Departments.

Members were advised that most actions are now underway (amber), however there are six sub-actions which have not yet been started, although it is intended that these commence this year.

With regards to the cumulative summary indicators, Members were informed that for Quarter 1, they are all green, with the exception of the total Special Services attended, which no longer has a target, as previously explained. It was re-iterated to Members that with regards to Special Services, we often have no way of influencing the number of calls, or indeed whether we would wish to reduce some of them, for example assisting partner agencies; and people locked in or out. Members were advised that for the Special Service calls that

we can influence, such as RTC's and Water Rescues, these have been made into individual LPI's.

The presentation highlighted to Members that the total number of incidents attended, are significantly lower than in 2018/19, although June 2018 was the beginning of the spate conditions, which saw unprecedented numbers of calls and incidents for a 2 month period.

Members were informed however, that even when compared with the cumulative figures for 2017/18, the figures are still significantly lower for this quarter.

With regards to primary fires, Members were advised that there were 38 less than in 2018/19; and the number of accidental dwelling fires, were also on target. They were also informed that unfortunately, there had been 1 fatality; and 28 injuries in accidental dwelling fires (2 being serious injuries), which is 4 more than for quarter 1 last year.

With regards to secondary fires, it was highlighted that there have been 247 less this year, compared with the same period last year.

In relation to false alarms attended, Members were informed that the reductions clearly show the impact and success of the Unwanted Fire Signals Strategy; and the hard work of the team. They were advised that this has resulted in a reduction of 74 alarm calls when compared to 2018/19; and 38 less domestic smoke alarm actuations.

A question was raised by Members as to whether officers are confident that the reductions are positive and not simply due to people not reporting incidents.

Members were informed that these type of calls are primarily down to system alerts, which when they are false alarms, often tend to be due to poor management or maintenance of the equipment. When the equipment is managed and maintained properly, the system is not actuating unnecessarily. Therefore, these type of calls are not impacted by human behaviour.

With regards to the number of fires in non-domestic premises, Members were advised that the figures for both deliberate incidents and accidental incidents, are under target and considerably lower than 2018/19.

In terms of the 19 deliberate incidents in 2019/20, Members were informed that 7 were in prisons, which is a reduction of 10 on the previous year. It was highlighted to Members, that again, this reduction reflects the work undertaken by staff.

In relation to accidental fires in non-domestic premises, it was highlighted that the current figures are 10 under target, with there being a total of 43 to date. Out of those, Members were informed that in 18 cases, the cause has been electrical equipment/ electricity.

In relation to the achievement of the 10 minute attendance standard, Members were informed that this has been achieved on 94.1% of occasions, which is significantly above the 90% target.

Members were advised that contributing to the fast attendance time, are two further KPI's; how quickly 999 calls are answered; and how quickly crews mobilise to an incident after being alerted by Fire Control.

With regards to the percentage of 999 calls being answered within 10 seconds, Members were advised that this is being achieved on 97.5% of occasions, above the target of 96%; and in relation to alert to mobile times being under 1.9 minutes, they were informed that this has been achieved on 95.9% of occasions, against a target of 95%.

In terms of the number of shifts lost due to sickness absence, Members were advised that the figures for grey book (operational) staff, red/ green (non-operational) staff; and all personnel, have all achieved the expected standard and are below the 4% target. With regards to the rise in non-operational staff sickness absence on last year's figures, Members were informed that this is due to a small number of staff being off on long-term sickness.

The presentation went on to highlight some KPI's which are for quality assurance only, as they are the type of incidents that we cannot influence in any way. Members were informed that the total number of emergency calls received, has been much lower this year compared to last year during the spate conditions.

With regards to Special Service calls that we would not wish to discourage, Members were informed that there has been an increase on the previous year, with a total of 865. Out of those, 127 were affecting entry, whilst 93 were in relation to assisting partner agencies, which is an in incident type on the increase.

They were informed that included within Special Service calls, is the number of RTC's, the LPI target for which has not been achieved. Members were informed that the Prevention teams work with Road Safety Partnerships to identify areas where RTC's occur and put speed reducing measures in place. They also look at groups to engage with around road safety, which at present, is the aged 16 to 25 group. With regards to RTC's, Members were advised that there have been 2 fatalities and 72 injuries, which is 23 less than last year, however 15 of those injuries were considered to be serious.

Members were advised that another area of Special Service calls that we are trying to influence, is around water rescue incidents. They were informed that there have been 6 such incidents this year, which is half the amount of last year. Examples of such incidents include searches for persons reported in the water; and vehicles in distress being towed to dock. Members were advised that again, Prevention teams are working with partners to educate around water safety.

With regards to HFSC's, Members were informed that a total of 14217 have been delivered during Quarter 1. 11669 have been delivered by operational crews, with 51.3% of those, identified by status reports as being households with at least 1 person over the age of 65. Members were advised that a total of 2228 Safe and Well visits have been delivered by Prevention Officers; and that our targeted approach to home safety was praised during the HMICFRS Inspection. Members were also informed that we continue to ensure that our resources are targeted to the right people; and that previously, the over 65's

have been targeted, however the link between incidents and deprivation, is currently being explored.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members of a couple of recent deliberate fires within Wirral, whereby the perpetrators have been identified and placed into custody within hours of the incidents occurring. Members were advised that this highlights the success of joint working between MFRA and Merseyside Police.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to requests from partner agencies for assistance; and whether those requests were due to those agencies requiring our skills, or not having the time to respond themselves. Members were informed that the vast majority are around gaining entry to premises, as our appliances contain the required equipment. They were also advised that the number of such concern for welfare requests, are increasing.

A further question was raised by Members with regards to our liaison with the RNLI, with reference being made to a recent television documentary; and whether incidents could be broken down to demonstrate the level of involvement with the RNLI.

Members were informed that in terms of water rescue incidents, a call would normally come from a member of the public, through to the coastguard, who would deploy both MFRA and RNLI assets. They were also informed that a number of calls have been in relation to people in difficulty in the mud. It was confirmed to Members that the number of Special Service calls could be broken down more widely; and that a report will be brought back to a future meeting, showing this breakdown and detailing how decisions are made regarding the deployment of assets.

A question was raised by Members with regards to the total number of fires attended during April 2019, which was significantly higher than the total number during April 2018; and whether there was a specific reason for the increase. Members were advised that the increase was predominantly due to the dry, warmer weather during April 2019, compared with the wetter weather during April 2018; and the fact that April 2019 encompassed the school holiday period.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The attached report be approved for publication on the Website.
- b) A further report be brought back to a future meeting, regarding a breakdown of Special Service calls; and information detailing how decisions are made with regards to the deployment of assets.

4. New St Helens Fire Station - Additional Fourth Bay

Members considered Report CFO/047/19 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the construction of a standalone fourth bay at the new St. Helens Fire Station, which will be sufficiently sized to house the Combined Platform Ladder (CPL) specialist appliance.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which highlighted the changes approved within the 2019-21 IRMP Supplement, including the introduction of a “Hybrid” duty system at three locations, including St. Helen’s, which will increase the number of available appliances.

Members were advised that the original, approved plans for the new St. Helens Community Fire Station, include 3 appliance bays, which would accommodate the “Hybrid” system (which operates with 3 appliances).

However, Members were also advised that a review is currently underway to identify the optimal locations for specialist appliances. At present, the Combined Platform Ladder (CPL) is located at St. Helens; and although the CPL could be moved to another station, the review has established that St. Helens is an effective location. Members were therefore advised that if the CPL remains at St. Helens, the 3 appliance bays within the original plans, would not be sufficient, hence the proposal to construct a standalone appliance bay at St. Helens.

Members were also informed that the proposals would maximise future opportunities for working with partners, as well as ensuring that all the appliances can be securely accommodated at the new St. Helens station.

Questions were raised by Members in relation to the financial impact of the proposals.

Members were assured that there was money available to utilise within the capital investment reserve.

They were also advised that although the site is fairly vast, the scope to add a fourth bay was restricted due to mine shafts. This meant that an extra bay could not be added onto the building, resulting in the proposal to build an independent, standalone building..

Members Resolved that:

- a) The current progress on the proposed new St. Helens Community Fire Station, be noted.
- b) The proposal to proceed with a new fourth appliance bay, be approved.
- c) The increase of the current scheme budget by £300k, funded by a contribution from the capital investment reserve, be approved.

5. THE SUPPLY OF ELEVEN TYPE B PUMPING APPLIANCES

Members considered Report CFO/046/19 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the intention to procure eleven Type B fire appliances, as per the vehicle/ fleet asset management plan; and in response to the approved changes contained within the 2019-2021 Supplement to the 2017-2020 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which explained that the Authority have a policy of refreshing appliances every 15 years.

Members were advised that appliances remain on the frontline for between 10 and 12 years, and are then utilised as reserve appliances for the remaining years of their asset life.

Members were informed of the recent decision by the Chief Fire Officer to delay the disposal of 4 appliances, due to the new IRMP Supplement proposals; and also the potential for a no-deal Brexit and possible subsequent civil unrest. The Chief Fire Officer explained that last time there was civil disorder, a number of appliances were damaged and therefore unavailable whilst being repaired. Therefore, in order to safeguard against such events, it was decided to delay the scheduled disposal.

It was confirmed to Members that the proposals reflect the Asset Management Plans; and the breakdown costs of appliances and a breakdown of the tender process, was highlighted to Members.

Members commented that the proposals relate to MFRA's core business and core equipment, for which they do not receive any capital grant. Therefore, the Authority are required to put aside revenue to fund the purchase of such essential equipment.

Questions were raised by Members regarding Corporate Social Responsibility; and how this was measured as part of the tender evaluation process. Members were advised that officers did not have the specific information to hand in relation to this contract, however some general examples were provided to Members; and they were advised that a more specific response would be provided by the Head of Procurement, following the meeting.

Further questions were raised by Members in relation to electric powered vehicles and whether there were charging points available on Community Fire Stations.

Members were advised that currently, there are not charging points on stations. They were informed that although there have been significant advances around electric vehicles, the technology has not developed sufficiently to enable electric fire appliances to be viable. With regards to the introduction of electric vehicles to the ancillary fleet, Members were informed that the cost of electric vehicles is currently still very high compared with the cost of other vehicles; and officers need to apply a judgement around the cost of the vehicle and the pay back. They were also informed that should the Authority decide to install electric charging points on stations, there would be tax implications for staff charging their own vehicles.

Members were advised however, that officers are very mindful of the changes around emissions and electric vehicles; and there will undoubtedly be a point in the future when electric vehicles will be introduced as part of the fleet.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The content of the report be noted.
- b) The proposed procurement, be approved.

- c) The increase in the 5 year capital programme appliance replacement scheme by £0.170m to £3.350m, to facilitate the future purchase of a 12th new appliance, be approved.
- d) Further information regarding the Corporate Social Responsibility criteria in relation to the tender evaluation process, be provided to Members.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 6 February 2020