

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE
URGENCY COMMITTEE

26 SEPTEMBER 2019

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Les Byrom, Andrew Makinson, Linda Maloney, Steff O'Keeffe and Jean Stapleton

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Brian Kenny and Cllr Emily Spurrell

1. Preliminary Matters

Members 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 required the exclusion of the press and public, due to the disclosure of exempt information:

Members were advised of the reasons for calling this meeting under the urgency provisions contained within the Constitution at Standing Order 17.1

2. Extension of current contract for the provision of Finance, Human Resources, Procurement and Payroll ICT Applications

Members consider Report CFO/052/19 of the Director of Finance, concerning the request to extend the current arrangement with Advance for the provision of Finance, People & Payroll, and Procurement applications for a period of 2 years, up to 2023.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, which provided a background to the current provision of ICT applications that meet the needs of Finance, People, Payroll and Procurement services.

Members were informed that over the last 6 years, significant staff and financial resources have been invested into getting the current ICT applications, fit for purpose. They were informed that the current applications deliver a fully integrated, best of breed solution that meets all service and regulatory requirements.

Members were advised that the current contract arrangements will end in August 2021, therefore officers will need to commence a procurement exercise for a replacement system, now to ensure that new systems are up and running by August 2021.

It was explained to Members that as the current arrangements are deemed fit for purpose; and are operating efficiently and effectively, Officers felt that an opportunity existed to try to sweat the significant investment in the existing ICT applications, by looking to extend the current arrangements until 2023. Therefore, negotiations were held with the current supplier in late spring, 2019. Members were informed that unfortunately, Officers were not able to get a finalised proposal, including the financial details, from the supplier, until late in August.

Members were advised that it is the recommendation of Officers that the current arrangements be extended up to 2023. However, if they wish Officers to commence a full procurement exercise for a new or alternative application provider, then Officers would need to commence the procurement exercise now, hence the reason for requesting consideration of the proposal as a matter of urgency.

Some of the benefits of extending the current arrangements to 2023, were highlighted to Members, as follows:

- It will extend the period of benefit the Service will receive from the last six years of financial and staff investment that has ensured robust and fit for purpose ICT applications for the relevant services.
- It will defer the need to invest significant staff and financial resources over the next 2 years, into the procurement of a replacement system.
- It may offer an opportunity to replace the current Stars (Staff Training and Management application); and People and Payroll application, with one single ICT application; and
- It provides additional flexibility for the future provision of Finance, People and Procurement applications, if any changes come about in the near future to the current governance or service arrangements.

Members were also advised that should they approve the recommendations within the report, a project will commence in 2021 to look at future replacement options for these applications, including looking at any collaboration

opportunities with neighbouring Councils, Merseyside Police, or other public sector bodies.

Members were further informed of collaboration discussions which have taken place with Merseyside Police, who are in the process of introducing an ERP. They were advised that MFRA have utilised a best of breed approach instead; and Members were assured that the applications we have, have been advanced and updated in the 6 years we have had them, meaning that they are still the best on the market. With regards to the ERP currently being procured by Merseyside Police, Members were advised that this is likely to take 2 years to embed. They were informed that discussions had taken place around this issue at meetings of the Strategic Leadership Team, where it was concluded that the cost in terms of time and effort of switching to an ERP, were not justified at present, however it was something that the organisation will take a view on at a future point.

Members were further informed that discussions had taken place with Merseyside Police, regarding the ability for MFRA to “on-board” to their ERP at a point in time. They were advised that in 2 years’ time, Merseyside Police’s ERP will be embedded, at which point MFRA may consider a collaborative approach.

Members commented that the approach proposed was sensible.

Members Resolved that:

The extension of the current arrangements with Advance, for the provision of Finance, People, Payroll and Procurement applications, for an additional 2 years, be approved.

Close

Date of next meeting Tuesday, 4 February 2020