

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 SEPTEMBER 2020

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Barrington, Bruce Berry, Anthony Boyle, Angela Coleman, Janet Grace, Andrew Makinson, Linda Maloney, Lisa Preston and Jean Stapleton

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Edna Finneran, Cllr Doreen Knight and Cllr Paul Tweed (Co-Chair)

1. Chair's Announcement

At the start of the meeting, the Chair of the Authority thanked everyone for attending and welcomed any members of the press or public who were observing the proceedings.

The Chair of the Authority then introduced the meeting and provided all present with an overview of how this remote meeting would work and some housekeeping.

A roll call was then taken of all Members present, to confirm that they could hear and be heard; and that they could see and be seen.

2. 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 of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the authority, held on 5th March 2020 were approved as a correct record and for signature by the Chair.

4. Health & Safety Performance Figures

Members considered Report CFO/048/20 of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, concerning the Authority's accident and injury performance for 2018/19 in comparison to the following:

- Other Fire & Rescue Authorities in England
- Other Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities (FRA's);
- And The North West Region Fire & Rescue Authorities.

It was highlighted to Members that the national fire statistics only cover Fire Fighter (FF) injuries and that out of 2646 overall injuries and fatalities nationally, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) contributed 33 injuries. 177 personnel across the North West Fire & Rescue Authorities sustained injuries during operational incidents in the 2018/19 period, MFRA contributed 23 of those injuries. 252 personnel sustained injuries during training incidents across the Metropolitan Fire & Rescue Authorities, MFRA contributed a total of 8 injuries. 88 personnel across the North West Region Fire & Rescue Authorities sustained injuries during routine activities, of which MFRA contributed 2 injuries.

Members were informed that MFRA has a positive Health & Safety culture. All near misses are reported and looked into by the Health & Safety Team and this is a good practice to follow. MFRA promotes safety first.

Members agreed that this was a good report and asked for a report of the accidents caused by handling, lifting and carrying as this was MFRA's highest yearly total of injuries. Members were advised that the Annual Health & Safety Report would be brought to the Authority in October 2020 where these questions will be answered.

Members resolved that:

The contents of this report and attached appendices, specifically outcomes for the Authority of its accident and injury performance in comparison to other Fire & Rescue Authorities during the 2018/19 period, be noted.

5. Positive Action

Members considered Report CFO/046/20 of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, concerning the Positive Action activities that are undertaken by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS).

Members were given an introduction from Sara Fielding, Recruitment Manager, who explained that Positive Action is a range of measures allowed under the Equality Act 2010 which can be lawfully taken to encourage and train people from under-represented groups to help them overcome disadvantages when competing with other applicants. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority work with individuals from black, Asian, females and LGBT communities to prepare them and help them consider a career within MFRS and have been doing this since 2017.

A video was then played for Members showing what the Recruitment & Development Team do to support Positive Action, showing 'Have A Go' days, which focus on those specifically considering a career as a firefighter.

Members then listened as 2 female firefighters shared their experiences regarding Have A Go days.

Members were then advised of the other work MFRA do to attract people to join MFRS, which consists of contacting stakeholders, drop in career sessions at charities, attending schools and colleges and taking on volunteers.

Positive Action is an ongoing endeavour and the Recruitment & Development Team are working positively to ensure MFRA has a diverse workforce.

Members thanked Sara for a wonderful presentation and emphasized that the Have A Go days are a fantastic way to encourage Positive Action.

Members asked if Covid 19 had stopped recruitment and how MFRA will deal with it going forward. Members were advised that smaller safer risk free events will take place, ensuring the health and safety of staff and the public are protected. MFRA follow Government guidelines on Covid 19 in and outside of the organisation. Members were also informed that individuals are helped with interview skills.

Members remarked that the future of MFRS is very positive.

Members resolved that:

the Positive Action activities that are carried out by MFRS, be noted, and agreed the suitability of the approach adopted.

6. Standing Item: Review of Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Members reviewed the current Forward Work Plan for the Scrutiny Committee; and considered the inclusion of any additional items for Scrutiny, and the priority of any additional items.

Members were informed of the completed actions and outstanding items.

Members resolved that:

the Forward Work Plan for Scrutiny, be noted, and offered nothing further to add to the plan.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 14 January 2021