

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

25TH MARCH 2021

MINUTES

Present: Cllr James Roberts (Chair), Councillors Steff O'Keffee, Dan Barrington, Lesley Rennie, Jean Stapleton, Les Byrom, Lisa Preston

Also Present: Cllrs Allan Brame & Edna Finneran (as substitutes for Cllrs Makinson & Coleman)

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllrs Andrew Makinson & Angela Coleman

8. 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 taken of all Members present, to confirm that they could hear and be heard; and that they could see and be seen.

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) 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 to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; and
- c) Item 3 Exempt minutes of the previous meeting is exempt.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 10th December 2020, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Part 2 EXEMPT Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Part 2 EXEMPT Minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, held on 10th December 2020, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

The content of the minutes were not discussed during the meeting.

4. Service Delivery Plan 2020-21 April-December Update

Members considered Report CFO/012/21 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the objectives and the performance targets/outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2020/21 for the period April to December 2020. The Integrated Risk Management Plan actions and HMICFRS action plan are reported twice a year and will be included in the end of year Service Delivery Plan report.

Members were given a brief overview of the report highlighting the following amber or red information from the Service Delivery Plan:

- There will be a site evaluation/feasibility study for a new Training and Development Academy (TDA) build, subject to a public consultation.
- The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) commander course content is being refreshed and take place in October 2021.
- The roll out of Site Information Risk and Hazards (SIRAH) was postponed and other applications are being looked at to obtain and integrate together.
- The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) team will be involved in the TDA new build project as a stakeholder.
- Control Room system 999Eye is reliant on an upgrade of Command and Control system, which is due at the end of the financial year.
- Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) have been reduced due to the outbreak of Covid19.
- The expansion and development of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) volunteers has not progressed as planned due to Covid19.
- The Youth Engagement Programmes have been temporarily suspended due to Covid19.
- Members were reminded that they are due to have an update in the form of a Learning Lunch regarding Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services (MFRS) response to the Grenfell Tower inquiry, as the Protection Team were waiting for legislative changes to take place.
- Training for Protection Staff regarding identifying Modern Slavery Signs and Human Trafficking will be arranged when the pandemic restrictions are lifted.
- The National Resilience website will be complete by the end of this year.
- The ED&I online training package will also be complete before the end of the year.
- A Communications Strategy has been drafted and is expected to be completed by the end of March 2021.

Members were advised that the vast majority of the Service Delivery Plan information was green and progressing well.

Members were then informed that the Benchmark Indicators regarding the services performance were positive.

Members were advised that the total number of emergency calls received is on target and below target, as is number of operational incidents attended, number of fires attended and number of primary fires attended.

The number of deliberate dwelling fires in properties had increased but Prevention Teams continue to work with partner agencies to target the organised crime and Members were advised that they perform really well together.

Members were then told that the overall sickness among all staff was at the target of 4%. Despite Covid19 related absence, which is included in that figure, staff sickness was at an all-time low. Members were advised that staff are able to access Lateral Flow Tests across all stations and premises to that measures were in place to protect staff during this time.

Members resolved that:

The attached reports for publication on the website, be approved.

5. Service Delivery Plan 2021-22

Members considered Report CFO/013/21 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the Service Delivery Plan for 2021/22, attached at Appendix 1 and the Community Fire and Rescue Station plans (Station Plans), attached at Appendix 2.

Members were advised that this report contains the information from the previous report, plus the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and access to the Station Plans.

Specific actions for crews from the Station Plans were emphasised including Liverpool City having a heightened level of focus on High Rise Buildings and business premises. Heswall focus on vulnerable, isolated individuals within communities who are vulnerable to fire related activities. Each stations focus is slightly different to reflect the environment and area that particular station responds to.

Members asked if there were any substantial changes to the plan and were informed that there is not any in relation to the performance indicators but will be for the targets that relate to them. Targets change over time reflecting the circumstances, which are looked at over the last 5 years. Operating during Covid19 has meant targets have remained the same.

The IRMP objectives and actions change and are always reported back to Members and delivered. The approach and targets are the same and the

Station Plans change to compliment IRMP actions. It has been challenging during the pandemic.

Members added that due to Covid19, many properties including factories, warehouses and shops are closed and this surely would affect the services response and if not performance. It has now been 1 year since the lockdown began and Members wanted to thank staff for all the efforts made. Members are proud of staff and are sure the population of Merseyside are thankful to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority also.

Members asked what could be done to reduce the amount of responses to false alarm calls and were advised that a number of years ago MFRS changed the response to automatic fire alarms which seen a significant reduction in the number of calls that were responded to, as 97% of calls were false.

Policy around automatic fire alarms is quite good and robust, but we continue to go to domestic properties where people sleep. People having call line systems has increased which in turn increases the demand on the Service. This year because of Covid19 many people were having fires outside in their gardens to burn refuse and the Service was called out a great deal due to this, only to arrive and see it was a controlled fire - these calls were false alarm good intent calls and this also happened more so over the bonfire period during the pandemic. MFRS would always want people to call them if they suspect or see a fire and the Service would continue to respond to calls.

There were number of incidents on beaches over last summer were people were not aware of the tides and Members asked if there were any measures in place for people to be aware of or any upcoming campaigns. Members were informed that over the summer period people make more use of green spaces, particularly Wirral and Formby Pine Woods. Site specific risk assessments are used for outside areas also and plans are put into place so incidents can be responded to as agilely and as quickly as possible. As stated in the IRMP, Wildfire Teams are to be introduced at Heswall and Formby to be able to proactively respond to any incidents at these locations. There have been proactive campaigns around coastal response and safe access to these locations. MFRS have a good working relationship with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and coastguard and they all educate and inform people about dangers and encourage people to think before they act because of dangers.

Members added that Local Authorities have dispersal zones currently around some coastal and green areas and it was highlighted that MFRS should assist with partner agencies here rather than enforce. Members were informed that MFRA Street Intervention Teams are deployed to these areas to educate and inform individuals in these areas. Members stated they are thankful for all the work MFRA do with all partner agencies.

Members resolved that:

The attached Service Delivery Plan and Station Plans for 2021/22, prior to publication of a designed version on the Authority's website, be approved.

5. Membership of the Authority 2021-22

Members considered Report CFO/008/21 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the proposed overarching Charging Policy (FINPOL01) for the Authority and instruct Officers to ensure their respective functional areas implement the policy and seek to maximise the recovery of income from the permitted but limited range of discretionary fees and charges, as appropriate.

Members were given a brief overview of the report highlighting that if approved it will ensure current charging arrangements are applied consistently across the Service and improve transparency is improved with users of chargeable service goods, by having a formal Charging Policy on the service website to refer customers to if required.

Members were advised that any charge levied is based on a cost recovery basis only and reflects the cost input in delivering the service and that the billing and payment process is consistent with Financial Regulation 4.35(a), also that there are no new charges.

Members asked if there was a conflict with the balance between the necessity to serve the people of Merseyside and to prevent the risk and unduly disadvantaging competitors on providing services. Members were advised that by charging for special services charges, for example lift rescues, it ensures that the private firms who provide similar services do not face unfair competition if Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) didn't charge for these services, businesses who do charge for them may go out of business - to some degree it ensures private businesses are not put out of business. Members responded by agreeing that this makes sense and that MFRA offers a fair service, whilst also utilising money for its own revenue to make the people of Merseyside safer.

Members resolved that:

- a) The overarching Charging Policy (FINPOL01) for the Authority, be approved;
- b) Officers be instructed to ensure the 'Charging Policy' is adhered to; and
- c) The charges will be uplifted annually as outlined in the policy and details about the charges will be included with each annual budget report for consideration, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting: 29th July 2021

Signed: _____

Dated: _____