

**MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MEETING OF THE**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Connor, Finneran, Grace, Hodson, Makinson, Preston and Thomas

**Also Present:** Ria Groves, Mike Rea, DCFO Nick Searle, ACFO Dave Mottram, AM Kev Longshaw

**Apologies of absence were received from: Councillors Wood and Tweed and Mr Anthony Boyle (Independent Member), Phil Garrigan (CFO) and Ian Cummins (Director of Finance and Procurement)**

**1. National Resilience Rapid Review**

A presentation was given to Members by Area Manager (AM) Kev Longshaw which provided an overview of deliverables and notable outcomes from 2020/21 financial year, as well as information regarding key work streams for 2021/22 that are associated with Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's (MFRA) role as lead authority for national resilience.

Members were advised that MFRA will continue to provide a high level of support to the UK in relation to National Resilience, coordinating resources to help tackle major incidents such as floods, building collapse, explosion and major fires.

Members asked do the Home Office (HO) get charged for this and were advised that MFRA receives Section 31 Grants from the Home Office and receives additional grants as lead Authority.

Members asked if Merseyside are lead authority because they are the best and were advised by AM Longshaw that he believes so, although plans were put forward for Merseyside to be awarded lead authority.

Members were advised that MFRA were appointed as Lead Authority for National Resilience in 2016 and that they are responsible for the oversight of four key elements:

- National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) – has a dedicated team of Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) seconded officers tasked to oversee and assure the day to day capabilities remain fit for purpose;

- Long Term Capability Management – responsible for maintenance and servicing of all vehicles and equipment via Babcock as prime contractor;
- Training – skills acquisition and FRS refresher training; and
- National Resilience Fire Control – mobilising elements for incidents.

All individual FRSs are required to maintain their local assets.

Members asked if the calls to the control room come here, Members were informed that they do.

Members asked if Officers are permanently on call and were advised that this role is taken in a shift pattern (1 week on 1 week off) but that the workforce has never been below 90% of staff being available, ensuring that experts are always present.

Members were advised that if there are any flood incidents, that these are funded by Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Grants are received for National Resilience incidents (i.e. wildfires).

Members asked if the Fire Service staff at Liverpool Airport were trained by National Resilience staff and were advised that the Airport Fire Service are experts in aviation so training takes place together to learn from each other.

Members were informed what was reported in the end of year statement of assurance and told how Covid impacted training delivery and assurance. New assurance framework will be established. HO have agreed to contribute towards the Long Lane site development from the income and savings MFRA have generated on their behalf.

Members were advised of National Resilience's functional plan 2020-21, which completed 4 out of 5 key deliverables, due to the impact of Covid last year. Assurance visits of assets were completed all over the country and self-assessments were completed on Zoom due to the lockdown. Throughout the pandemic, the staff level was never below 90% operative, but visits and training was restricted.

Members asked if National Resilience measure Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and were advised that they do which are met.

Members were then updated with the eight items for the 2021-22 functional plan.

- Governance: There will be a review of the Home Office National Coordination Advisory Framework (NCAF) and associated FRS supported guidance.
- Engagement: Face to face meetings will take place with the Home Office, as they have not happened due to Covid, although virtual meetings have taken place via MS Teams.
- Learn: Work streams have been completed via e-learning.
- Record: Standard tests are done differently throughout the United Kingdom (UK) and these will be standardised.
- Inform: Explore the use of Resilience Direct – if/how it is appropriate to use.
- Collaborate: In hand.

- Support: When Prince Philip passed in April, National Resilience provided support by using special teams and assets to assist. National Resilience is not just limited to specialist capabilities.
- Enhance: Phase 2 of the new website is being developed.

Members thanked AM Longshaw for an excellent and detailed presentation.

Close

Signed \_\_\_\_\_