

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

9 JUNE 2022

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Leslie Byrom
Cllr Sharon Connor
Cllr Tracey Dickinson
Cllr Edna Finneran
Cllr Harry Gorman
Cllr Jan Grace
Cllr Dave Hanratty
Cllr Lynn Hinnigan
Cllr Brian Kenny
Cllr Andrew Makinson
Cllr Hugh Malone
Cllr Linda Maloney
Cllr Lesley Rennie
Cllr James Roberts
Cllr Gillian Wood

Also Present: Anthony Boyle, Phil Garrigan, Nick Searle,
Dave Mottram, Ian Cummins, Ria Groves

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Anna Rothery, Cllr Lynne Thompson, Cllr Paul Tweed,

1. Preliminary Matters

The Authority 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) declaration of interest from Councillor Wood in respect of item 7 specifically in regard to the Growth Platform
- 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.

(a) Appointment of Chair

Councillor Les Byrom was nominated to be Chair of the Authority by Councillor James Roberts, seconded by Councillor Jan Grace. The Chair thanked the Members for providing him with the privilege to Chair the Authority for another year.

The Chair thanked the Members who had retired from the Authority for their contributions and for acting as Ambassadors for the Fire Authority in Merseyside. The Chair welcomed Councillors Tracy Dickinson, Anna Rothery and Dave Hanratty and Harry Gorman to the Authority as new Members for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that Councillor Les Byrom be appointed at the Chair of the Authority for 2022-23.

(b) **Appointment of Vice-Chair**

Councillors James Roberts and Brian Kenny were nominated by Councillor Byrom as Vice-Chairs of the Authority as seconded by Councillors Linda Maloney and Jan Grace.

RESOLVED that Councillors Roberts and Kenny be appointed as Vice-Chairs of the Authority for 2022-23.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Members were advised that the Minutes from the Urgency Committee would be considered at the next Meeting of the Authority, as the meeting took place after the agenda was published.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Authority, held on 24th February 2022, were approved as an accurate record.

3. Membership of the Authority 22/23

(Please enter Reference 1)

The Members considered a report relating to the membership of the Authority for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the contents of the report be noted;
- b) the membership of the Authority further to the appointments by the five district councils be noted;
- c) the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Merseyside to the Authority be continued; and

- d) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to review the role of Independent Person and Co-Opted Member in order to present a report that considers best practice from other authorities in the next 12 months.

4. Structure of the Authority

Ria Groves, Monitoring Officer presented the report, which considered the structure of the Authority. It was noted that all Members had been provided with the matrix for Committees prior to the meeting.

It was explained that there had been no changes to the actual committees other than adding a Member to the Audit Committee for a total of six and a new quorum of four Members.

Members were made aware of a typographical error on page 28 of the report and it was explained that the correct proportionality should read Labour 72.21%, Liberal Democrat 11.11% and Conservative, Green and Liverpool Community Independent Group 5.56%.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Members determine the Committees it wished to establish;
- b) the number of voting Members to be appointed to each Committee be determined;
- c) the number of seats on each Committee to be allocated to each political group in accordance with the political balance regulations be determined;
- d) the alternate Members from the relevant political group to attend a Committee in the absence of the substantive Member be determined;
- e) the Members who are to be appointed to Committees and roles attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance be determined, in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group in respect of those seats allocated to that group;
- f) the Members who are to be appointed to Lead Member roles be confirmed;
- g) Members inform Democratic Services prior to the start of any meeting if an alternative is attending on their behalf; and
- h) the proposed structure to reflect the recommended changes to the number of seats on Audit Committee be approved.

5. Meeting Dates for 22/23 and 23/24

Members were advised that the Scrutiny meeting in May had been brought forward to April to avoid any clashes with local elections. It was requested that the date for the next Strategy Day be moved from the 14th July to an alternative date that week to avoid a clash with a bi-election at Wirral Council.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the schedule of meeting dates and events for 2022/23 (attached as Appendix A) be considered and an alternative date for the Strategy Day in July be approved; and
- b) the draft provisional dates for 2023/24 (attached as Appendix B) be considered and noted

6. Questions on Discharge of Functions

Members considered the report, which requested that nominations for district Members responsible for questions on discharge of functions be agreed.

RESOLVED that the five Members (one from each constituent District Council) be nominated as the Member responsible for answering questions within their Council on the discharge of the functions of the Authority.

7. Appointment of Membership to Outside Bodies

It was noted, that at the previous Annual General Meeting, it was agreed to continue with LGA Membership unless otherwise stated and as that had not happened, the Authority was still affiliated with the LGA.

The Chair noted that there was new legislation this year that would be a challenge for the Authority as well as the recent government white paper and therefore it was crucial that Members maintain a knowledge base and lobbying on key issues.

RESOLVED that:

- a) current affiliations to outside bodies be noted;
- b) the continued affiliation with each of the organisations specified in the report be approved; and
- c) the appointments of Members to each of the outside organisations as the Authority's representatives be approved.

8. Approved Conference and Outside Meetings

Members considered the report relating to attendance at conferences and outside meetings.

RESOLVED that attendance at conferences and outside meetings by representatives of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority as determined by the Chair be approved.

9. Meetings with National Politicians at Party Political Conferences

Members noted that this report was a standing item at the Annual General Meeting and related to the Authority's power to lobby the government at party political conferences.

RESOLVED that:

- a) appropriate representatives of the political group of the Authority to attend meetings with Ministers, Opposition Spokespersons and other relevant national politicians, to be held at the locations of their own party-political conferences, to discuss issues relating to the business of the Authority be approved;
- b) appropriate travel and subsistence expenses for such meetings be approved, but no payment of conference fees be made; and
- c) issues raised, responses and progress made be reported back to the Authority.

10. Members Allowance Payments 2021/22

The Chair introduced the report which provided a backward view of the previous years allowance payments for 2021/22.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the report and at Appendix 1 be noted.

11. Scheme of Members Allowance 22/23

Members considered the report, which presented the scheme of Member's allowance for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that:

- a) continuation with the current Member's allowance scheme be approved;
- b) any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Member' Allowance is normally aligned to the previous year's Firefighters pay award be noted;
- c) a pay increase to the Scheme of Members allowances in line with the Firefighters Pay Award for 2022/23 which would apply to 2023/24 allowances be approved; and
- d) the combined roles of Co-opted Members and Independent Member be approved which includes:

- i) the appointment to both the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee, as a non-voting member (subject to approval of structure);
- ii) any complaints against Members, alleged to have breached the Member's Code of Conduct and relevant officers under the Relevant Officers Disciplinary Procedure on the Independent Panel as the "Independent Person" be continued; and
- iii) to be paid for conducting such roles following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £50 (as and when required) as is the current case.

12. MFRA Constitution

Ria Groves, Monitoring Officer, explained that there were no significant changes within the constitution for 2022/23 and that the latest version sought to amend some typographical errors and note the change to structure for the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the draft amended Constitution for 2022/23 be approved;
- b) the Monitoring Officer to the Authority be instructed to keep the Constitution under review; and
- c) in the event of any relevant changes in legislation, a further report be brought to the Authority.

13. Construction of a New Multi-Pump Superstation, Training and Development Academy /National Resilience Centre of Excellence at Long Lane Aintree

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented the report which sought final approval for the construction of a new multi-pump superstation and training and development academy and centre of excellence at Long Lane Aintree.

It was explained that there had been a cost to date of £0.5million and the purchase of the land would cost £3-4million with income from the Home Office and a capital grant contributing towards the build. The total new commitment for the project would be £36,098million.

Members were advised that the proposal to merge the stations and build a superstation had been approved by the authority as part of the Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2021-24. The proposal had been approved at a Planning Committee of Liverpool City Council on the 3rd May 2022 followed by a very supportive consultation process in October 2021. The CFO explained that this project would see a reinvestment into front line services that was a valuable cornerstone of the Authority.

The benefits of the proposal were discussed including an improvement to the number of engines available and quicker response times across both locations with an improvement of 49 seconds in Aintree alone. The development would improve inclusivity and accessibility for staff and the community, and the superstation would be significantly greener in terms of the carbon efficiency.

The improvement to training facilities were emphasised with a focus on training against realistic scenarios as a result of the recommendations from the Grenfell incident.

In summation, the development would significantly enhance fire fighter safety whilst making crews more effective, resilient and quicker to respond to incidents.

Councillor Maloney queried if the proposal could create an income for the Authority if other FRS came to Merseyside to train. It was explained that rather than generate income, there was the potential to offset some of the costs, which could then be reinvested back into MFRS.

Councillor Hanratty queried what contingency was in place to safeguard the Authority against unforeseen financial issues. It was also requested that the Authority receive regular reports on the progress of the project from a Lead Officer using a traffic light system to identify any imminent risks. Councillor Hanratty asked if there was an indication of how much income from overseas partners could be achieved and if the capital receipts of the buildings being sold could be ring-fenced for this project. With regards to budget, it was asked whether the ICT budget was sufficient considering the facility that was being proposed. Finally, Councillor Hanratty queried if other emergency services were collaborating with the Authority on this project to encourage cross working and a unified approach to response.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that further costs to the Authority had been mitigated with inflation control and after discussion with the contractors, greater price security and protection against rising costs had been secured. Contingency arrangements whether for financial reasons or otherwise have been reviewed and phasing in elements of the build will be assessed as necessary however the Chief Fire Officer believed the proposals would create the best training facility in the UK.

Members were assured that regular reports on the progress of the development would be submitted to the Committee. Officers would be made available to Members to provide updates on construction and any milestones.

With regards to external income, it was explained that the report being submitted did not factor in any external income to ensure that the project was sustainable for the Authority and within its control. Members were advised that any additional funding would be reinvested into the project.

Concerning capital receipts, the Chief Fire Officer explained that income from the sale of those buildings would contribute to building costs.

In terms of ICT, it was agreed that the figures were challenging but some services would be reused and therefore cost less than may be expected.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the North West Ambulance Service currently co-habited seven of the Authority's stations and Merseyside Police worked alongside MFRA at the JCC. Deputy Fire Officer, Nick Searle added that conversations were ongoing, as part of the Collaboration Board and this would continue.

Councillor Hanratty welcomed the funding from government but expressed that more was needed, and more financial support should be offered to reflect MFRA's brilliant record of accomplishment and reputation. It was explained that MFRA has not received capital funding from the government for a long time and the £2million that was being provided by the Government recognised the work undertaken by MFRA nationally on behalf of the Home Office. Conversations were ongoing with the Home Office around support and funding for the service.

The Chair reported that he had spoken with the Police and Crime Commissioner about collaboration, and it was agreed that this would be considered.

It was agreed that a project liaison be established for the project to provide updates to the Members.

Members voted on the recommendations and agreed the recommendations below unanimously.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the combining of Croxteth and Aintree fire stations into a single site at Long Lane, Aintree as per the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2021-24 be approved; and
- b) the purchase of the land at Long Lane, Aintree for £3.938m be approved;
- c) the construction of a new multi-pump superstation, training and development academy/national resilience centre of excellence at Long Lane Aintree as per the IRMP 2021-24 be approved;
- d) the capital budget allocation of £39.198million as outlined in the finance section of the report, and the associated £14.253m borrowing be approved. That the Authority has incurred costs to date of £1.2million and received £1.7million from Home Office and a further £0.2m available from unspent Home Office grant be noted. Therefore, that £36.098 million of Authority expenditure be committed;
- e) a Design and Build contract to Wates Construction as detailed in the finance section be awarded;
- f) the Marketing for sale of Croxteth Fire station, Aintree Fire station and Vesty 5a and 5b and Richie Avenue be instructed with a report brought back to Members for final approval; and

- g) delegated powers to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Director of Finance and Procurement and the Monitoring Officer to progress collaborative opportunities (including sponsorship) which are currently under consideration with Mersey Rail/ National Highways and specialist smoke control systems (Certus) should in the case of sponsorship the value exceed the current delegated powers of £25,000 be noted and approved.

14. Award of Contract to procure a new fleet of van for use by National Resilience

Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle, presented a request to award a contract to procure a new fleet of national resilience vans as part of the Authority's role as lead for national resilience.

It was explained that this formed part of supporting a refresh of national resilience assets over the next few years.

Councillor Gorman asked if the Authority had considered purchasing electric vehicles as part of this procurement. It was explained that this procurement formed part of the national transport asset management plan which included consideration of environmentally friendly technology as led by the Home Office.

RESOLVED that the award of a contract to Northern Commercials Limited acting on behalf of Iveco Limited, for the supply of a fleet of 18 vans for the purposes of National Resilience's Detection, Identification and Monitoring capability be approved.

15. Purchase of a 45m Bronto Combined Platform Ladder (CPL)

Members were requested to consider the purchase of a 45-meter Bronto Combined Platform Ladder (CPL) as proposed in the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan.

It was explained that the CPL was available in the next four –five months at a discounted cost as it was a demonstration model. The ladder would allow access to high-rise buildings, could act as a water tower and would broaden the service's capabilities.

Councillor Hanratty queried how the equipment would be stored and future proofed. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the CPL would fit on the current 34-meter CPL chassis so it could be stored easily and would be able to operate in narrow streets. A test-run at Liverpool City Centre had been undertaken and when building new stations, this kind of equipment would be taken into consideration.

RESOLVED that the purchase of the immediately available demonstration 45-metre Bronto CPL be approved.

16. **Multi - Function Device Contract Renewal 2022**

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented the report, which sought to award a contract for multi-function devices for the next five years. Members' attention was drawn to the savings made in this area over the last 12 months

RESOLVED that the award of the Authority's Multi-Function Device 5 year Contract be approved.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 27 October 2022