

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

8 JUNE 2023

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair)** Sam Gorst,
Gillian Wood, Edna Finneran, Linda Maloney,
Lynne Thompson, Janet Grace, Brian Kenny, Lesley Rennie,
James Roberts, Paul Tweed, Dave Hanratty, Lamb, Knight,
Murphy, Byron, Pat Moloney, Barbara Murray and Mr Anthony
Boyle

Also Present: Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan, Director of Finance and
Procurement Ian Cummins, Monitoring Officer Ria Groves

Apologies of absence were received from:
Emily Spurrell (PCC)

1. Apologies

Apologies received from the Police and Crime Commissioner, Emily Spurrell.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gill Wood declared an interest in item 10, noting that she is employed by the Growth Platform and as such would not take part in that item.

3. Appointment of Chair

The Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, asked for nominations for the appointment of Chair of the Authority for 2023/24.

Nominee:

Councillor Les Byrom - nominated by Councillor Dave Hanratty
 - seconded by Councillor Linda Maloney

No further nominations were made and Councillor Byrom accepted the position, noting that it was a great privilege to chair such a well achieving Authority.

RESOLVED that Councillor Les Byrom be confirmed as the Chair of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for the municipal year 2023/24.

4. Appointment of Vice Chair

Nominations were requested for the positions of Vice Chair of the Authority for 2023/24.

Nominees:

Councillor Brian Kenny and Councillor James Roberts

- nominated by Councillor Les Byrom
- seconded by Councillor Linda Maloney

RESOLVED that Councillors Brian Kenny and James Roberts be confirmed as Vice Chairs of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority for the municipal year 2023/24.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, made the Members aware of a technical error when issuing the agenda that had caused the below inaccuracies in the minutes. It was agreed that the following amendments be made:

Page 7 Item 2 – date to read Thursday 23rd February 2023

Page 7 Item 3 – date to read Wednesday 22nd March 2023

Page 8 Item 5 – clarify that the proposal is for Merseyside Fire and Rescue FRS and not Liverpool.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2023 with the inclusion of the above amendments be agreed as an accurate record.

6. Membership of the Authority

Members considered report CFO/021/23 of the Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, noting the changes to membership resulting from decisions taken by the local authorities.

The Chair placed on record the Authority's thanks to the Members who had left and welcomed those new Members to the Authority.

RESOLVED that:

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

7. Structure of the Authority

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves presented report CFO/022/23 which provided Members with the political balance of the Authority and each Committee. It was confirmed that the largest opposition party for 2023/24 would be the Liberal

Democrats and the Opposition Spokesperson would be Councillor Lynne Thompson and the political balance had remained the same as 2022/23.

Members agreed the following appointments:

Chair of the Authority:	Councillor Les Byrom
Vice Chairs of the Authority: James Roberts	Councillor Brian Kenny and Councillor
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Lynne Thompson

Committee	Members
Community Safety & Protection Committee 9 Members (6,1,1)	1 Cllr (Chair) B Kenny 2 Cllr E Finneran 3 Cllr J Grace 4 Cllr L Maloney 5 Cllr P Tweed 6 Cllr D Knight 7 Cllr L Thompson 8 Cllr Gorst 9. Cllr Lamb
Policy & Resources Committee 9 Members (7,1,1)	1 Cllr (Chair) J Roberts 2 Cllr B Murray 3 Cllr S Murphy 4 Cllr D Hanratty 5 Cllr T Byron 6 Cllr G Wood 7 Cllr L Byrom 8. Cllr P Moloney 9. Cllr Rennie
Audit Committee (proposed increase from 5 to 6) 6 Members (4,1,1) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr (Chair) J Grace 2 Cllr E Finneran 3 Cllr B Murray 4 Cllr S Murphy 5 Cllr P Moloney 6. Cllr Gorst
Scrutiny Committee 9 Members (6,1,1,1) (Plus 1 Independent Person)	1 Cllr (Chair) P Tweed 2 Cllr L Maloney 3 Cllr G Wood 4 Cllr D Hanratty 5 Cllr T Byron 6 Cllr D Knight 7 Cllr P Moloney 8 Cllr Rennie 9. Cllr Lamb

Appointments Committee (3,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Party Group Leaders	1 Cllr (Chair) L Byrom 2 Cllr J Roberts 3 Cllr B Kenny 4 Cllr L Thompson
Appeals Committee (3,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and Party Group Leaders	1 Cllr (Chair) L Byrom 2 Cllr J Roberts 3 Cllr B Kenny 4 Cllr L Thompson
Joint Fire & Police Collaboration Committee 4 Members (3,1) Made up of the Chair, Vice Chairs, and 1 Opposition Spokesperson (Plus PCC)	1 Cllr (Chair) L Byrom 2 Cllr (vice) B Kenny 3 Cllr (vice) J Roberts 4 Cllr L Thompson
Member Development & Engagement Group (3,1)	1 Cllr (Chair) B Murray 2 Cllr Finneran 3 Cllr Wood 4 Cllr P Moloney

RESOLVED that:

- a) The Committees the Authority wishes to establish be determined;
- b) the number of voting Members to be appointed 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) an alternate from the relevant political group already appointed to the Authority attend a Committee in the absence of the substantive Member be determined;
- e) Members who are to be appointed to Committees and roles, attracting a Special Responsibility Allowance in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group in respect of those seats allocated to that group be confirmed;
- f) Members who are to be appointed to Lead Member roles be confirmed; and to be advised; and
- g) Members inform Democratic Services, prior to the start of any meeting if an alternate Member is attending on their behalf be confirmed.

8. Meeting Dates 23/24 and 24/25

Members considered report CFO/023/23 and were advised that the meeting dates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 had been circulated.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the schedule of meeting dates and events for 2023/24 be considered and approved; and
- b) the draft provisional dates for 2024/25 be considered and noted.

9. Questions on Discharge of Functions

It was agreed that the following Members would represent their districts to answer questions on discharge of functions:

Member	District
Councillor Brian Kenny	Wirral Council
Councillor Les Byrom	Sefton Council
Councillor James Roberts	Liverpool City Council
Councillor Edna Finneran	Knowsley Council
Councillor Linda Maloney	St Helens Council

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

10. Appointments of Membership to Outside Bodies

Members considered report CFO/025/23 of the Monitoring Officer which sought to appoint Members to outside organisations to which the Authority was affiliated.

Members agreed to continue the Authority’s affiliation with the following organisations and to the appointment of the following Members and officers:

Organisation	Representative
Local Government Association Fire Services Commission	Councillors Les Byrom, Brian Kenny and James Roberts
North West Employers Forum	Councillor James Roberts
North West Fire and Rescue Advisory Forum	Councillors Les Byrom, Brian Kenny, James Roberts and Lynne Thompson Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan
Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities	Councillor Les Byrom
Liverpool City Region Growth Platform	Area Manager Protection and Area Manager Prevention

Members were advised that a nomination for Merseyside Community Safety Partnership was no longer required from Members although it was noted that the Chief Fire Officer would attend on behalf of MFRS.

RESOLVED that:

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

11. Approved Conference and Outside Meetings

Members considered report CFO/026/23 noting that since Covid there had been a decline in the number of conferences and outside meetings attended by Members.

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

12. Meetings with National Politicians at Party Conference

RESOLVED that:

- a) appropriate representatives of the political groups of the Authority to attend meetings with Ministers, Opposition Spokespersons and other relevant national politicians, to be held at the location 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 but no payment of conference fees be approved; and
- c) issues raised and responses and progress on information received be reported back to the Authority.

13. Members Allowance Payments 2022/23

Members considered report CFO/028/23 which provided a retrospective review of Member's allowance payments for the financial year 2022/23.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the report and at Appendix A is noted.

14. Scheme of Members Allowance 2023/24

Members considered report CFO/029/23 which set out the proposed scheme of allowances for 2023/24.

Councillor Murray noted that the addition of an extra Independent Member to the Authority was a good idea as it would help to strengthen the Authority's arrangements.

RESOLVED that:

- a) continuation with its current Members' Allowance Scheme be approved;
- b) any variations to the Scheme, in line with the structure of the Authority and the approved budget, be identified
- c) any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowance, normally aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay and subsistence allowance by the previous year's March CPI, be noted;
- d) a pay increase to the Scheme of Members' Allowances, in line with the Firefighter Pay Award for 2022/23, apply to 2023/24 allowances be approved;
- e) the current roles of Co-opted Member and the Independent Person be combined be approved: and
 - i. to both be appointed to Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee as a non-voting member (subject to approval of the structure);
 - ii. continue to consider any complaints against Members alleged to have breached the Members' Code of Conduct and Relevant Officers under the Relevant Officers Disciplinary Procedure on the Independent Panel as the "Independent Person"; and
 - iii. be paid for conducting such roles, following submission and verification of invoices, at a daily attendance rate of £60 (as and when required) as is the current case;
- f) the appointment of s second Independent Person be advertised locally and interview be approved.
- g)

6. MFRA Constitution 23/24

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, presented report CFO/030/23 and highlighted to the Members the changes that had been made to the Constitution for 2023/24.

It was explained that there were some typographical errors being remedied in Part 1 and 2 of the Constitution. Additionally, it was proposed that the value of contracts in the (Scheme of Delegation) be increased from £250,000 to £300,000 given the impact of inflation.

The report also proposed that the 'Contract Standing Orders' be increased from £10,000 to £12,000.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the draft amended Constitution for 2023/24 be approved;
- b) the Monitoring Officer 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

16. Staff Survey Results 2022

The Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan presented report CFO/031/23 which presented the key findings from the recent staff survey.

It was reported that the Authority had scored in the top percentile for engagement, scoring higher than the external benchmark in all areas. Members heard that staff felt a strong alignment to the corporate values and there were good channels of communication across the organisation.

Councillor Murphy welcomed the action plan at Appendix A and asked for timelines to be added in order to monitor progress.

The response rate was queried by Councillor Hanratty, who suggested that the Authority consider ways to encourage more staff to engage in the future. It was also suggested that the results of the staff survey be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief explained that the Authority would review circulating pulse surveys in order to gain feedback on specific topics affecting staff. The Chair agreed that the Authority should try to engage more of its staff to give feedback and that this was an issue across the public and private sector.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the contents and finding of the report be noted; and
- b) actions for continuous improvement within the report be considered and approved.

Close 13.28

