

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY, SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2024

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors** Brian Kenny (Chair), Sam Gorst, Lynne Thompson, Edna Finneran, Jan Grace, Linda Maloney, Paul Tweed, Doreen Knight and Ed Lamb

Also Present:	Chief Fire Officer	Phil Garrigan
	Director of Finance and Procurement	Mike Rea
	Monitoring Officer	Ria Groves

7. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

8. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

9. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

10. Amazon Digital Marketplace - 1142

Mike Rea, Director of Finance and Procurement, presented the report which related to a framework agreement with Amazon Business for Digital Marketplace and the benefits of using this.

With regards to tail spend, Mike Rea advised that this related to small values of less than £50.

Councillor Jan Grace queried whether this framework would be reviewed before 2027 and this was confirmed by Mike Rea.

Mike Rea explained that the framework would be available for the Authority to utilise until 2027 and there would be a call off order with the ability for the Authority to spend up to £300,000. Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, stated that the Authority could stop utilising the call off contract at any point if they were no longer happy with it. The three years represented the time period for which the framework would be available.

Councillor Ed Lamb wondered whether local suppliers may have been overlooked on the framework and he was advised that the Authority could choose to concentrate spend within a 50-mile area.

RESOLVED that the award of a call-off contract with Amazon Business until 23 January 2027 be approved.

11. **Bonfire Report 2023**

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, introduced the report which related to the Bonfire Period 2023. Group Manager, Mark Sopp, took the Members through a presentation, noting that it had been a successful bonfire period with a 5.5% reduction in deliberate fires, as well as firework incidents by 31.3%. He also added that 76 licenses for the sale of fireworks were issued during that period.

Suzanne Hazza, MFRA Lead for the Bonfire period, explained that planning for the next bonfire period would begin again in due course and would include the organising of tipper trucks, staff volunteers and engaging with the community to be proactive in highlighting any issues early. She emphasised the importance of educating children around the dangers and consequences of building bonfires.

Councillor Sam Gorst queried whether the reduction in firework incidents was related to the crackdown on the illegal sale of fireworks in neighbouring counties. Mark Sopp advised that there had been a multi strand approach to tackling this issue which included work done in the community to educate school children and preventive work carried out through campaigns.

Councillor Edna Finneran suggested that teenagers may benefit more if they heard the consequences of fireworks from someone their own age rather than an adult. Suzanne Hazza noted that this will be taken on board as they are always looking for ways to improve their approach.

It was acknowledged that the MFRA Corporate Communications team played a big part in keeping the community safe through sending out social media messages as part of their 'Do us a Favour' campaign.

Members were advised of two large scale community bonfires that were organised in Ilchester Park and Woodchurch in 2023, stating that MFRA had worked with the Police and Local Authority to ensure that they went ahead in a safe manner. Mark Sopp mentioned that MFRA had a positive influence at these events and no injuries were reported.

Councillor Paul Tweed asked how events like this were funded. It was advised by Area Manager, Mark Thomas, that a lot of the funding came from communities and there were dedicated Facebook groups to manage the organisation of such events.

Councillor Sam Gorst raised concerns about the reselling of illegal fireworks in schools and asked how the Authority could mitigate against that risk. He also noted that there were 69 incidents attended by crews in Liverpool and 43 of those had been in his ward in Garston.

Mark Sopp advised that if fireworks were being traded in schools, then awareness in schools was crucial to eliminate this behaviour from a young age. Members were assured that this issue would be discussed at the multi-agency debrief where the strategy for this coming year would be formulated.

Members discussed organised displays noting that there were no organised bonfire events arranged through Wirral or Knowsley Council, however, there had been an event in St Helens. It was suggested that there be more of a Fire Authority presence at skip events in the community.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that tipper trucks were used to proactively clear bonfire materials identified by the public or crews. MFRA encourage housing partners such as Liverpool Housing to manage their areas through the provision of skips to dispose of potential waste. It was noted that some districts had chosen not to do this due to the costs associated.

It was acknowledged by the Chief Fire Officer that 'Mischief Night' was unique for Merseyside compared to other areas, with regards to the Bonfire period. This was always one of the busiest periods for MFRA and Merseyside Police and the Authority would be working proactively in the coming years to further reduce the number of incidents.

Councillor Jan Grace asked for further detail on how the Authority ensured retailers were in compliance with legislation relating to the sale of fireworks. Members were assured that the Authority worked with Trading Standards and visited premises across Merseyside and tested suppliers to ensure that they were not selling fireworks illegally. Licenses were revoked if retailers did not abide by the legislation.

Councillor Linda Maloney noted that laser lights were becoming a trend as opposed to traditional fireworks displays. Suzanne Hazza advised that there was a list of events taking place across Merseyside that crews shared with the public.

Councillor Lynne Thompson commented that the reduction in derelict building fires was encouraging. She mentioned that one derelict building in her ward was being demolished leaving them with a 23-acre site, which could be a risk. The Chief Fire Officer reassured the Members that MFRA were aware of this site and there had been extensive dialogue with the Local Authority with regards to the safety and management of the site.

With regards to joint working with the Police, The Chief Fire Officer advised that information was shared across Services to ensure that the movement of fireworks was limited between counties.

RESOLVED that the content of the report and the impact that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service ('MFRS') staff have had on the delivery of the Bonfire Plan 2023 be noted

12. Award of Contract to Procure NR PPE

This minute contains exempt information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13. Insurance Tender 2024

This minute contains exempt information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Close.

Date of the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 4 April 2024.