

# **MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES**

**20 MARCH 2025**

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** **Councillor** James Roberts (Chair) Councillor Leslie T. Byrom, Councillor Gillian Wood, Councillor Barbara Murray, Councillor Lesley Rennie, Councillor Andrew Makinson and Councillor Chris Page

**Also Present:** Chief Fire Officer Nick Searle  
Director of Finance and Procurement Mike Rea  
Monitoring Officer Ria Groves

#### **12. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Hanratty, Dickinson, and Bell. Councillor Page attended as a substitute for Councillor Hanratty.

#### **13. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.

#### **14. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **15. Service Delivery Plan 2024-25 April to December**

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report and updated Members on the performance of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service against the objectives and the performance targets/outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2024/25 for the period October to December 2024 (Quarter 3).

It was advised that the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) TC05 for Special Service Calls, no longer had a set target and was for quality assurance purposes only. It was noted that this decision was made due to the type of incidents attended, and under agreement of the service to not discourage any calls.

Additionally, for similar reasons, KPI FC13 Total False Alarms Attended, discounting False Alarm Good Intent and KPI FC24 Total Number of False Alarm Good Intent attending including Non-Alarm Receiving Centre Domestic

Incidents, no longer have a target and were also recorded for quality assurance purposes.

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle highlighted the performance detailed for the period April to December 2024, which was detailed within the report's appendices.

Members were directed to page 26 of the report, which detailed the number of fatalities resulting from accidental dwelling fires, specifically noting an increase to seven, compared to the previous year.

Members were advised that the Prevention team had undertaken additional efforts to identify any recurring trends for key areas of focus for the upcoming year.

Attention was drawn to page 32, where Members noted KPI TD09, displaying the percentage of available shifts lost to sickness absence for all personnel. It was advised that the figures presented were above target at 4.36%, with the target set at 4%. It was explained to Members that the figures were above target due to Norovirus and heavy colds, which lasted a considerable amount of time and still would have an impact on service.

**RESOLVED** that the attached Service Delivery Plan reports (Appendices A-I) for publication on the website be approved.

**16. Draft Service Delivery Plan 2025-26**

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the report and advised Members on the Draft Service Delivery Plan for 2025-26.

Members noted that the Authority's Annual Service Delivery Plan included the annual actions arising from the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Functional Plans, Station Plans, and accompanying Performance Indicators.

It was noted that targets for station outputs had been set by staff in consultation with the relevant Functions e.g. Site-Specific Risk Information (SSRI) and Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC). Members were advised that each target was bespoke to each station area, considering the local and seasonal risk. For example, Liverpool City Community Fire Station had a large number of commercial buildings requiring SSRI inspections in that area. In contrast, it was noted that Heswall Fire Station had very few buildings requiring SSRI but would concentrate more on Home Fire Safety Checks due to the large proportion of over 65s within the predominantly residential area.

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle highlighted that each Function had produced a Functional Plan for 2025/26. These plans included actions to deliver against the CRMP 2024-27 objectives, following a 12-week consultation process which commenced on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 for new CRMP.

Members attention was drawn to the individual station plans contained in the appendices, which were drafted as bespoke for each station and had been

rigorously checked by staff, considering respective stations. The Station and Managers and Firefighters had been involved in designing each of the plans, which will be displayed on station notice boards to facilitate staff in achieving the set targets.

**RESOLVED** that the Service Delivery Plan (Appendix A) and Station Plans for 2025/26 (Appendices B - X) be approved and a designed version be published on the Authority's website.

**17. Staff Survey Results 2024-25**

Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle introduced the Staff Survey 2024-25 report which included a summary of the results provided by People Insight, who had conducted the survey on behalf of the Authority.

Members noted that the 2024-25 report had been benchmarked against the Authority's engagement results during the 2022 survey. Members acknowledged that it had been the sixth engagement survey which had taken place at the Authority. Members were advised that People Insight had also provided engagement surveys to 33% of Fire Rescue Services in the UK.

It was advised that the survey response rate was 41%, (422 of staff) and Members were advised that this was an improvement on 32% during 2022. Future methods were discussed to improve response rates in years to come.

Members attention was drawn to the results and questions contained on page 309 of the report. Chief Fire Officer, Nick Searle advised Members that the Strategy and Performance directorate were working on uploading comments and suggestions on the Authority's intranet page.

Councillor Byrom highlighted the insightful opportunity for Members who dialled in to retrieve the results for the staff survey via Teams. He discussed the high engagement score, expressing the importance of listening to staff and continuing to gain increased engagement. He suggested that the results of the Staff Survey be referred to the Scrutiny Committee for further consideration. Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves explained that the suggestion had already been a topic within the current municipal year. However, Scrutiny Members could agree in the next municipal year to consider the results further.

The Chief Fire Officer discussed the importance of the high 88% engagement score result, which would encompass the direction of travel for the future results. It was noted that data analysis was compiled and benchmarked, and that comments were shared with individual directors anonymously. It was mentioned that this would help guide ongoing enhancements to the Authority's future strategies.

Councillor Murray drew attention to page 303, where she inquired as to the differences in percentages with the response rate score at 41%, yet the staff survey was 88%. The Chief Fire Officer clarified that 41% of the Authority's staff took part in survey, which then presented an engagement score of 88%.

With regards to improvement, Councillor Murray noted that efforts to stress participation amongst staff were needed to explain how important the feedback was.

Members were assured that the Authority had achieved the highest response rate so far but would strive for higher engagement levels and efforts from staff in the years to come. It was explained that the Authority had donated £2 to the Firefighters Charity for each survey completed an additional incentive.

Councillor Murray advised that she would praise the Authority's efforts in encouraging staff with charitable donations at her future meetings at her Local Authority.

Councillor Wood queried whether was any additional level of feedback and work after comments were published, as it was noted that some staff could potentially identify themselves.

The Director of Strategy and Performance, Deb Appleton advised that over 2000 free text comments were received, and data analysis and confidentiality had been considered to assess whether staff had unintentionally identified themselves. It was noted, if applicable, that this would be redacted. Members noted that the feedback given to each department was very detailed and had a further breakdown consisting of the way staff felt, without breaking anonymity.

Deb Appleton highlighted that People Insight had carried out surveys for a substantial proportion of Fire Services, and other local companies and Local Public Sectors noting that the Authority had detailed that staff felt connected to the service and would recommend it as a place to work.

Councillor Les Byrom noted that HMICFRS would also comment on the Staff Survey Results and provide feedback around response rates.

**RESOLVED** that the survey outcomes be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 24 July 2025