

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

13 JUNE 2024

MINUTES

Present: **Councillors** Les Byrom (Chair), James Roberts (Vice-Chair), Brian Kenny (Vice-Chair), Edna Finneran, Ed Lamb, Linda Maloney, Jan Grace, Lesley Rennie, Paul Tweed, Dave Hanratty, Lynn O’Keeffe, Barbara Murray, Andrew Makinson and Mr Anthony Boyle

Also Present:

Chief Fire Officer	Phil Garrigan
Monitoring Officer	Ria Groves
Director of Finance and Procurement	Mike Rea
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Nick Searle
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	Dave Mottram

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lynne Thompson, Jeanie Bell, Sam Gorst, Paul Tweed and the Police and Crime Commissioner Emily Spurrell.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any of the items on this agenda.

3. Appointment of Chair

The Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, asked for nominations for the appointment of Chair of the Authority for 2024/25.

Nominee:

Councillor Les Byrom – nominated by Councillor Linda Maloney and seconded by Councillor Jan Grace.

No further nominations were made and Councillor Byrom accepted the position.

RESOLVED that Councillor Les Byrom be appointed as Chair of the Authority for 2024/25.

4. Appointment of Vice-Chair/s

Nominations were requested for the positions of Vice Chair/s for the municipal year 2024/25.

Nominee:

Councillor Brian Kenny – nominated by Councillor Les Byrom and seconded by Councillor Linda Maloney

Councillor James Roberts – nominated by Councillor Les Byrom and seconded by Councillor Edna Finneran.

RESOLVED that Councillors Brian Kenny and James Roberts be appointed as Vice-Chairs of the Authority for 2024/25.

5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 16th May be agreed as an accurate record.

6. Membership of the Authority

Councillor Les Byrom placed on record his thanks to Councillors Byron, Moloney and Murphy who were leaving the Authority and welcomed Councillors Makinson, O’Keeffe and Bell who had been appointed for this municipal year.

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 in Merseyside be noted; and
- c) the appointment of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Merseyside to the Authority be continued.

7. Meeting dates for 24/25 and 25/26

Councillor Les Byrom noted that the report included a list of dates for meetings and events for the upcoming municipal year. It was explained that there was flexibility in the dates, and they could change if required. Members were encouraged to attend as many meetings and events as possible, in particular the Station Visits and Engagement Days.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the schedule of meeting dates and events for 2024/25 (attached at Appendix A) be approved; and
- b) the draft provisional dates for 2025/26 (attached at Appendix B) be noted.

8. Structure of the Authority

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, presented the report and gave an overview of the political proportionality of the Authority for 2024/25. It was noted that Labour were the largest majority, followed by the Liberal Democrats (Councillor Lynn Thompson was confirmed as the Opposition Spokesperson for 2024/25).

Members agreed the following structure:

Committee	Members
Community Safety & Protection Committee 9 Members (6, 1, 1, 1)	1 Cllr (Chair) B Kenny 2 Cllr E Finneran 3 Cllr J Grace 4 Cllr Lynn O'Keefe 5 Cllr P Tweed 6 Cllr D Knight 7 Cllr L Thompson 8 Cllr E Lamb 9. Cllr L Rennie
Policy & Resources Committee 9 Members (7, 1, 1)	1 Cllr (Chair) J Roberts 2 Cllr B Murray 3 Cllr L Maloney 4 Cllr D Hanratty 5 Cllr J Bell 6 Cllr G Wood 7 Cllr L Byrom 8. Cllr A Makinson 9. Cllr L Rennie
Audit Committee (proposed increase from 5 to 6) 6 Members (4, 1, 1) (Plus 1 Co-opted Member)	1 Cllr (Chair) J Grace 2 Cllr E Finneran 3 Cllr B Murray 4 Cllr Lynn O'Keefe 5 Cllr A Makinson 6. Cllr S Gorst
Scrutiny Committee 9 Members (6, 1, 1, 1) (Plus 1 Co-opted Member)	1 Cllr (Chair) P Tweed 2 Cllr L Maloney 3 Cllr G Wood 4 Cllr D Hanratty 5 Cllr Jeanie Bell 6 Cllr D Knight 7 Cllr A Makinson 8 Cllr E Lamb 9. Cllr S Gorst

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 L Thompson

It was noted that five Members has been nominated to Lead Member roles covering Protection, Prevention, People, Preparedness and Operational Response and it was agreed that this role would not attract a special responsibility allowance.

The Chair confirmed that the Lead Members had been provided prior to the meeting as per below:

Preparedness	Cllr Edna Finneran
People	Cllr Jan Grace
Response	Cllr Lesley Rennie
Prevention	Cllr Barbara Murray
Protection	Cllr Gill Wood

It was confirmed that the Chair of Scrutiny would represent the Authority on the Local Pension Board.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the committees to be determined were as agreed in appendix B of the report;
- b) the number of voting Members to be appointed to each Committee was determined and agreed in accordance with appendix B;

- c) the number of seats on each Committee to be allocated to each political group in accordance with the political balance regulations be determined and was approved in accordance with appendix B;
- d) an alternative from the relevant political group already appointed to the Authority can attend a Committee in the absence of the substantive Member be approved;
- e) the 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 had been confirmed with the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting;
- f) the nominations proposed by the Chair for the Lead Member roles were approved;
- g) the nomination proposed by the Chair prior to the meeting for the Employer Representative on the Local Pension Board be approved; and
- h) that Members will inform Democratic Services prior to the start of any meeting if an alternative Member is attending on their behalf be approved.

9. Questions on Discharge of Functions

The following Members were nominated as responsible for questions on discharge of functions:

Liverpool	Councillor James Roberts
Knowsley	Councillor Edna Finneran
St Helens	Councillor Linda Maloney
Sefton	Councillor Jan Grace
Wirral	Councillor Brian Kenny

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

10. Approved Conference and Outside Meetings

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves presented the report which related to Members attending Conferences and outside meetings.

Councillor Dave Hanratty suggested that Members report back to the Authority when they attend conferences and outside meetings, and it was agreed that this practice continue.

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

11. Meetings with National Politicians at Party Conference

The Chair presented the report, noting that the facility to meet with national politicians at party conferences had been in place for a number of years.

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 made be approved; and
- c) issues raised and responses; and progress on information received be reported back to the Authority.

12. Appointment of Membership to Outside Bodies

The Chair presented the report which detailed the Authority's membership to various outside bodies.

It was noted that the Growth Platform had become part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority(LCRCA). Members were advised that a report from the Monitoring Officer on associate membership for MFRA would be submitted to the Authority meeting on the 26th June 2024.

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

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) appointments of Members to each of the outside organisations as the Authority's representatives and to confirm which Members will be representing the Authority at each outside organisation be approved as appropriate.

13. Members Allowance Payments 23/24

Members were presented with the allowance payments for the previous financial year (2023-24).

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

14. Scheme of Allowance 2024/25

The Chair presented the proposed scheme of allowances for 2024/25.

RESOLVED that

- a) continuation with it's current Members' Allowance Scheme be approved,
- b) any inflationary increase to the Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances is normally aligned to the previous year's Firefighters' pay and subsistence allowances by the previous year's March CPI be noted;
- c) a pay increase to the Scheme of Members allowances in line with the Firefighters Pay Award for 2023/24 which would apply to the 2024/25 allowances be approved;
- d) the current roles of Co-opted Member and the Independent Person to be combined; and
 - i. to be appointed to both the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee, as a non-voting member (subject to approval of the structure);
 - ii. to 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. to 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.

15. MFRA Constitution 24/25

Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, presented the report which outlined the proposed changes to the Constitution for 2024/25. It was noted that the Constitution was reviewed throughout the year to ensure it was relevant.

The proposed changes included amending some minor typographical errors, and clarifying and updating the correct references for example to the Community Risk Management Plan.

It was expected that there would be legislative changes impacting the Contract Standing Orders later in the year and as such further amendments may be required.

Members were advised that there had been a change to the financial regulations, raising the amount of virement to be reported to the Authority to £75,000. It was noted that this was the first time this had been raised in over fifteen years, however this increase reflected the impact of inflation and the rise in cost of goods during this period.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the draft amended Constitution for 2024/25 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 back to the Authority.

Close

Date of next meeting Wednesday, 26 June 2024