MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

4 APRIL 2024

MINUTES

Present:	**Councillors** Les Byrom (Chair), Linda Maloney, Lynne Thompson, Sam Gorst, Paul Tweed and Sue Murphy.	
Also present:	Chief Fire Officer	Phil Garrigan
	Director of Finance and Procurement	Mike Rea
	Monitoring Officer	Ria Groves

14. Appointment of Chair

Councillor Brian Kenny, who was due to be Chair of the meeting, gave his apologies, therefore Monitoring Officer, Ria Groves, asked for a nomination of Chair. Councillor Linda Maloney nominated Councillor Les Byrom, which was seconded by Councillor Sue Murphy.

15. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillors Kenny, Knight, Lamb and Grace.

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

17. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the public and private minutes of the previous meeting held on 30th January 2024 were agreed as an accurate record with an amendment to minute number 11; Bonfire Report 2023, paragraph 15 to clarify that the derelict building being referenced was the current Pontins site.

18. People Plan

Chief Fire Officer, Phil Garrigan, introduced the report noting that the draft People Plan 2024-2027 had been produced and was subject to six weeks consultation with key stakeholders, colleagues and representative bodies. He noted that people and culture was at the forefront of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's (MFRA) work. It was explained that the People Plan described how the Authority would utilise their people across the organisation to deliver the current Integrated Risk Management Plan and any future Community Risk Management Plan and other relevant strategies to ensure the safety of the

public. The Chief Fire Officer added that he had recently communicated to all staff that the Service had recorded the lowest number of accidental dwelling fires and fire deaths that Merseyside had ever had, which was a testament to the Authority's people. The Plan also detailed how the Authority aims to act, treat people and behave as an organisation to create inclusivity and a sense of belonging in all departments across the Service.

The People Plan detailed the Core Code of Ethics which had been introduced nationally. The Chief Fire Officer explained that as part of the six-week consultation, there would be direct links to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and the Cultural Transformation Plan which reflected the ambitions of the Service.

The report summarised the leadership message and how the Authority aspired to be the best Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. The Code of Conduct explained the ground rules around inclusivity, celebrating differences, tackling any inequalities and what was expected of Authority Members and staff members.

The Chief Fire Officer drew Member's attention to the Authority's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. He noted that the five objectives had remained consistent over the years, however, there was a slight change in objective four based on the views of staff and Members. This was in relation to strengthening the Services cultural confidence to ensure that staff were aware of the diverse communities of Merseyside. Whilst acknowledging that this was not within the Authority's control, Councillor Les Byrom noted that the goal was for the Authority to be representative of the population of Merseyside.

Councillor Linda Maloney commented that the statement on page 17 stood out to her. In particular, she made reference to the following wording – 'I don't want us to measure ourselves on the performance of others, I want us to create our own culture, one which instils a real sense of belonging'. She commended the Authority on always being at the forefront of this issue. The Chief Fire Officer mentioned that in his 34 years in the Service, he had never seen the Authority deliver a more effective service to the public and the people who work within it. He added that there was still work to do and reassured Members that the People Plan was their commitment to do that.

Members were reminded that Bystander Training would be delivered on 25th April 2024 to encourage Members to speak up and not ignore any unacceptable behaviour. Councillor Les Byrom recommended that all Members should attend if possible.

Councillor Sam Gorst queried the gender benchmarking figures and where public faces in senior management roles sit. He also asked for this data to be added into the report in the future, which the Chief Fire Officer explained was included in the annual report. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the organisation was made up of 51% female staff and 49% male staff, with two female staff being in the Senior Leadership Team. He acknowledged that the focus for inspection was usually on operational staff and explained that 13.4% of Firefighters were female in Merseyside compared to 10.1% across all

Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Service's and 8.8% across all English Fire and Rescue Service's. Out of the 82 female Firefighters in the Service, there was 1 Group Manager, 3 Station Managers, 11 Watch Managers and 11 Crew Managers. The Chief Fire Officer added that a further supervisory manager process had recently concluded, which would increase the numbers of females progressing throughout the Service.

Councillor Les Byrom added that there was a growing number of Senior and Principal Officers from diverse backgrounds in the country and that it was important for the Authority to keep up with the pace of changing society.

With regards to Union involvement, Members were advised that this was the Authority's People Plan, rather than the Fire Brigade Union's, however, it would incorporate the views of the Union representatives, alongside staff views.

RESOLVED that;

a) the contents of the draft People Plan be noted; and

b) the draft Plan would be subject to six weeks consultation with key stakeholders, including the Authority's staff networks and representative bodies be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 5 September 2024

Signed: _____

Dated: _____