MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

20 OCTOBER 2016

MINUTES

Present: **Cllr Dave Hanratty (Chair)** Councillors Sharon Connor, Joe De'Asha, Janet Grace, Brian Kenny, Chris Meaden, Les Byrom, Linda Maloney, Peter Brennan, Barbara Murray, Lesley Rennie, James Roberts, Jean Stapleton, Sharon Sullivan and Marianne Welsh

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Cllr Denise Allen, Cllr Veronica McNeill and Cllr Paul Tweed

10. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chair informed those present of additional items made available in relation to Agenda Item 9 – *"Firefit Hub Options, Appraisals and Recommendations".*

Members were reminded of some forthcoming events as follows:

- 10th November 2016 – Training Session covering Code of Conduct, Legal Responsibilities and Equality & Diversity

- 17th November 2016 – Station Visits (Kensington and Aintree Community Fire Stations)

Information regarding general housekeeping was provided by the Chair to all in attendance.

The Chair confirmed to all present that the proceedings of the meeting would be recorded and requested that any members of the public present who objected to being filmed, make themselves known.

No members of the public voiced any objection therefore the meeting was declared open and recording commenced.

1. Preliminary Matters

The Authority considered the identification of any declarations of interest, matters of urgency, or items that would require the exclusion of the press and public due to the disclosure of exempt information.

Resolved that:

a) The following declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to items of business on the Agenda:

- Councillor Brennan declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 9 – *"Firefit Hub Options and Appraisals"* due to being a Member of the Commutual Board.

- Councillor Stapleton declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 9 – *"Firefit Hub Options and Appraisals"* due to being a Member of the Firefit Hub Board of Trustees.

- Councillor Connor declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 9 – *"Firefit Hub Options and Appraisals"* due to being on the Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) Social Operations Committee.

- Councillor Les Byrom declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 5 – *"Disposal of Obsolete Response Vehicles to the St. John Rescue Corps"* due to being a member of St. John's Ambulance.

b) no additional items of business were determined by the Chair to be considered as matters of urgency; and

c) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the authority, held on 30th June 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Minutes of the North West Fire & Rescue Advisory Forum 14th July 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the North West Fire & Rescue Advisory Board on 14th July 2016, were considered and noted.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that contained within the Minutes was an update from him to the Board. Within that update, it stated that the meeting of Wirral Council's Planning Committee to consider the planning application for the proposed new station at Saughall Massie, was scheduled to take place on 20th October 2016. However, that Planning Committee meeting has now been deferred to 10th November 2016.

4. PFI PROJECT - 2015/16 PROGRESS REPORT

Members considered Report CFO/078/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning a progress update in relation to the North West Fire and Rescue Services Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Project, over the financial period April 2015 to March 2016.

Members Resolved that:

Progress of the North West Fire & Rescue Services PFI Project, be noted.

5. Disposal Of Obsolete Response Vehicles to the St John Rescue Corps

Members considered Report CFO/080/16 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning the donation of a Mercedes transport vehicle and Small Fires Unit vehicle to the St John's Rescue Corps, Malta.

Members Resolved that:

The decision of the Chief Fire Officer to donate a Mercedes transport vehicle and Small Fires Unit vehicle to the St. John's Rescue Corps, Malta, under the scheme of delegation – Article 19.3 (b) (ii), contained within the Constitution approved by Members in June 2016, be noted.

6. Historical Analysis of Fatalities in Accidental Dwelling Fires between 2006/07 and 2015/16

Members considered Report CFO/079/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the performance, analysis and trends in relation to the Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatalities experienced between 2006/07 and 2015/16.

Members were provided with a detailed overview of the report which highlighted the main themes emerging from the analysis. They were informed that the information is used to ensure that resources and interventions are targeted most efficiently and effectively.

Significant discussion took place around the report, with particular concern raised regarding the number of fire deaths in Wirral, the causes of fires; and the growing number of people living within our communities with dementia.

Members were informed that historically, the number of fire deaths in Wirral has been high, to some extent due to deprivation, but also due to the high numbers of vulnerable elderly people living independently within specific wards. They were assured that extensive re-assurance campaigns take place following every fatal fire.

Further discussion took place around the sharing of data to enable resources to be targeted towards the most vulnerable within our communities.

It was acknowledged that there is a national agreement in place around the sharing of data with the NHS, and through utilising this data, the volume of our interventions are targeted towards individuals over the age of 65.

It was further acknowledged that although MFRA do all they can, there is only so much that can be achieved with a finite resource.

Further comments were made regarding the figures contained within the report, which appear to highlight a direct causal link between fire fatalities and resources. It was noted that this picture is mirrored across the Country and is not unique to Merseyside.

Members suggested that the recommendation within the report, be amended slightly.
They asked that the report be shared with all partners, to highlight the data and raise awareness; asking partners to consider any further assistance they can provide.

They also suggested that Authority Members appointed by Wirral Council, meet with Officers to discuss and identify if there is anything more that they can do to raise awareness of fire risk within their communities.

Members Resolved that:

a) The performance and analysis concerning Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatalities between 2006/07 and 2015/16, be noted.
b) The report be shared with all partners, in order to highlight the data and raise awareness.

c) Partners be asked to consider the information contained within the report; and identify any further contribution that they may be able to make.
d) Authority Members appointed by Wirral Council, meet with Officers to consider what they could do to help raise awareness of fire risk within their communities.

7. Results of the Employees Engagement Survey

Members considered Report CFO/077/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the results of the MFRA staff engagement survey 2016.

Members were informed that the first staff engagement survey for a number of years, was undertaken in 2014; and that the same set of questions has been used in the 2016 survey, to enable benchmarking. Both surveys were undertaken independently by People Insight, in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.
It was noted that both surveys were undertaken during a period of unprecedented change.

The survey methodology was highlighted to Members, along with a summary of the outcomes of the survey. The 19% improvement in engagement score was also highlighted as being one of the highest observed by People Insight.

Members' attention was also drawn to the comments from the Fire Brigades Union in relation to the outcomes of the survey, contained within the report.

Discussion took place around the report, particularly in relation to responses around caring about the future of MFRS; and bullying and harassment. It was noted that the way in which people respond to questions, can often be down to how they perceive the question.

Members acknowledged the significant progress made since the previous survey; and thanked all staff and Representative Bodies for working with the Authority to improve engagement.

Representatives of the Fire Brigades Union were invited to comment on the report. They commented that following the last survey, there has been some challenging dialogue, which they thanked the Equality and Consultation Manager for facilitating. They also confirmed their commitment to continue working with the Authority and Officers.

Members Resolved that:

a) The content of the report be noted.
b) Their support be given to the development of an engagement action plan, which will be generated in response to the priority areas identified within the report.
c) The Lead Member for Strategy & Performance, be actively involved in this work, to ensure that the action plan is delivered and the Authority continues to improve its engagement with all staff groups.

8. Draft IRMP 2017-2020

Members considered Report CFO/081/16 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning release of the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017-20, for a period of 12 weeks' consultation prior to adoption and implementation, whilst noting that the proposals outlined within the IRMP may change to reflect the views expressed during the consultation process.

Members were informed of the requirement for the Authority to produce an IRMP, which must identify and assess all fire and rescue related risks. How the Authority makes provision to respond to incidents must also be reflected within the document.

Members were provided with an overview of the draft IRMP, highlighting the organisational context; and the changing risk profile across Merseyside, with the population increasing – mainly due to having an ageing population. This creates a challenge for the Authority, due to the well-established link between increasing age and fire risk.

Members were informed that as the Authority's budget continues to reduce year on year, it is becoming increasingly difficult if not impossible for the Authority to improve services. Therefore, the proposals within the IRMP have been developed around a set of planning principles.

Members were then provided with an overview of the operational response proposals, highlighting that the Authority can no longer afford to continue to staff all stations on a whole-time basis, all of the time. As there are no more feasible station merger options, options around changing the way in which some stations are crewed have been identified, which will enable the Authority's finite resources to be used most appropriately.

The proposals around Operational Preparedness and Community Risk Management, were also highlighted, along with the five Equality Objectives contained within the draft IRMP.

Members Resolved that:

The draft IRMP 2017-20, be approved for release for a period of 12 weeks' consultation prior to final approval, publication and implementation.

9. Fire Fit Hub Options Appraisals and Recommendations

Members considered Report CFO/075/16 of the Chief Fire Officer, concerning options, appraisals and recommendations in relation to the Firefit Hub.

Members were provided with an overview of the report, highlighting the background and the financial challenges.

Members were provided with re-assurance that Officers will ensure that access to the gym and community facilities be maintained as it is at present.

Members thanked all staff involved in the work undertaken to date.

Members Resolved that:

a) Transfer of the Charity into LMH, subject to LMH adhering to the MyPlace Objectives and terms and conditions of the grant as stated by the Department for Education (DfE), be endorsed.
b) The transfer of the "Toxteth Firefit Hub Charity" into "Commutual", which is the charitable name within which the Hub will operate, be approved.
c) Entry into a Deed of Variation with Liverpool City Council, which would allow for purchase of the freehold of the property at less than best consideration following the expiration of the Grant clawback period, subject to an overage deed as described in this report, be agreed.
d) The proposal to obtain the freehold for the site in 2031, subject to the grant conditions being met, be approved.
e) Offer of the freehold option to Commutual under the Deed of Variation to purchase the freehold of the property at less than best consideration,

following the expiration of the Grant clawback period, subject to an overage deed as described in this report, be agreed. This is agreed on the understanding that the land on which the fire and rescue station sits, is separated from that on which the youth zone sits, by the redrawing of the boundaries, although the two would remain physically joined.

f) The corporate requirements placed on MFRA in relation to the disposal of Authority assets at less than market value, be noted; and agree that should there be a change of use for the Fire and Rescue Station post 2031, that MFRA will incorporate the “training area” into the Hub in exchange for the Hub’s rights of access plus a market value fee fixed now, which may be waived at the discretion of MFRA at a future point.
g) The said changes be agreed to be made, subject to agreed access arrangements to the Gym and Community room being unaffected by such changes such that the employees of MFRA and the community would enjoy rights to use both facilities on the same basis as are currently enjoyed.
h) In order to ensure the successful running of the charity and to maintain the relationship with the Authority and the charity in the delivery of its services, it be noted and assumed that, subject to the necessary approvals of the LMH Board, MFRA will maintain its representation on the Commutual Board.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 26 January 2017

Signed:_____ Date:_____