

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING		
DATE:	26TH JUNE 2014	REPORT NO:	CFO/064/14
PRESENTING OFFICER	CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	JANET HENSHAW	REPORT AUTHOR:	
OFFICERS CONSULTED:			
TITLE OF REPORT:	STRUCTURE OF THE AUTHORITY		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: DRAFT AUTHORITY STRUCTURE FOR 2014/15 APPENDIX B: TEMPLATE APPENDIX C: ROLE OF LEAD MEMBERS
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Purpose of Report

1. To :-
 - (a) inform Members of:-
 - (i) the minimum legal structure of the Authority;
 - (ii) the existing decision-making structure of the Authority; and
 - (iii) optional variations to the existing structure.
 - (b) request that the Authority determines an appropriate decision-making structure for 2014/15; and
 - (c) request that arrangements are made for the appointment of Committees, the nomination of Chairs, the determination of the powers and duties of Committees and the appointment of Members to Committees and Lead Member Roles.

Recommendation

2. That the Authority determines an appropriate decision making structure for 2014/15 by :-
 - (a) Determining which Committees it wishes to establish.
 - (b) Determining the number of Voting Members to be appointed to each

Committee.

- (c) Determining the number of seats on each Committee to be allocated to each political group in accordance with the political balance regulations.
- (d) Determining that alternates are to be appointed from the relevant political group, who can attend a Committee in the absence of the substantive Member.
- (e) Confirming the Members who are to be appointed to Committees and Lead Member Roles, in accordance with the wishes of the relevant political group in respect of those seats allocated to that group.
- (f) Confirming that Members will inform Democratic Services prior to the start of any meeting of an alternate Member if they are unable to attend.
- (g) Confirming whether it wishes to continue with the existing structure and/or whether it wishes to amend the structure.

Executive Summary

This report confirms the political balance of the Authority as 16 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative Member.

Based upon the balance of the Authority, Members are requested to consider and determine the appropriate decision making structure, appointment of Committees, nominate Chairs and Members to those Committees; and nominate Members to the Lead Member Roles.

Introduction and Background

Information

3. Minimum Legal Requirement

3.1. The minimum statutory requirements for a decision-making structure are:-

- (a) Authority Meetings - There is a statutory requirement to hold an Annual Meeting (before the end of June in each year) and to meet to determine the precept each year (by the end of February in each year). The Authority is also required to consider other miscellaneous matters including statutory reports of the Chief Finance Officer or Monitoring Officer and public interest reports should they arise.
- (b) It is recognised as good practise to have an Audit Committee or a Committee that deals with audit matters.

4. Existing Structure

4.2. At present, the Authority has appointed:-

- (a) A Community Safety and Protection Committee and a Policy and Resources Committee both consisting of 8 Members and a Performance and Scrutiny Committee consisting of 5 voting Members (according to Political proportionality), open to all Members (with the exception of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Authority), along with an Independent Person who does not have voting rights. The Community Safety and Protection Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee have delegated decision making powers in the circumstances where there is no opportunity for the Authority to meet in full.
- (b) An Appeals Committee and an Appointments Committee,
- (c) An Audit sub Committee consisting of 5 Members which also deals with Member Standards issues, and
- (d) A Consultation and Negotiation sub Committee consisting of 4 Members.

Each Committee has certain delegated powers which are contained within its Terms of Reference.

4.3. The Authority has also:

- (a) appointed Lead Members with additional responsibility for certain services and
- (b) appointed a Member Development Group with approved terms of reference, consisting of Officers from Democratic Services and People & Organisational Development; and one Member from each political group.

5. Determination of a Structure

5.1 A draft structure is attached to this report as Appendix A. This incorporates revised Lead Member roles and proposes that:

- (a) The current Committee Structure as outlined above remains,
- (b) The Lead Members roles are realigned to Performance and Scrutiny.

5.2 It is also proposed that the Performance and Scrutiny Committee be increased to 7 Voting Members, comprising of the 6 appointed Lead Members and Chair of the Committee, plus an Independent Person, who does not have voting rights. Appendix C outlines the proposed Lead

Member roles. Specific Role Descriptions will be devised for each of the Lead Member Roles.

- 5.3 The proposed Terms of Reference and powers of each Committee and Sub Committee are contained within the Constitution for 2014/15 which is the subject of another report on this Agenda.
- 5.4 In making their decision on a structure, Members are also requested to take into account the following matters:-
- (a) the requirement for each political group to complete a notice in writing to the Clerk detailing their Membership and a Group Leader;
 - (b) the requirement for political balance on any Committees which are appointed and unless the Authority has resolved otherwise and no Member has voted against such resolution;
 - (c) the requirement to appoint Members to Committees in accordance with the wishes of the political group to whom the seat has been allocated. In this respect it will assist the Clerk if all such nominations can be determined on, or before the Annual Meeting;
 - (d) the appointment of Chairs of Committees.
 - (e) the appointment of Lead Members; and
 - (f) the requirement for approval of the Powers and Duties of each appointed Committee.

6. Number of Seats & Political Balance/Membership of Committees

- 6.1. The Authority is required to make appointments to its Committees in a manner which, so far as practicable reflects the political balance of the Authority unless the Authority has resolved otherwise and no Member has voted against such resolution.
- 6.2. There have been local elections this year for the District Councils. As a result the representation of each political group on the Authority will be as follows:-

Labour	16 Members
Liberal Democrat	1 Members
Conservative	1 Member

- 6.3. In order to comply with political balance requirements, where practicable it is therefore appropriate that the proportion of seats on Committees allocated to political groups is as follows :-

Labour	88.89%
Liberal Democrat	5.56%
Conservative	5.56%

- 6.4. Having decided which Committees the Authority is to establish, and the number of Voting Members to be appointed to each Committee, it is then appropriate for each political group to submit nominations for membership of those Committees in accordance with the allocation of seats to that political group.
- 6.5. Members are requested to consider their nominations in advance of the meeting, so that the information can be provided at the Annual Meeting, to enable the Authority to confirm the appointments at the Annual Meeting.
- 6.6. A template for Members to complete is attached as Appendix B to this report.

7. Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees

- 7.1. Having determined which Members are to be appointed to the Committees, it is appropriate for the Authority to consider proposals for the appointment of Chairs of Committees.
- 7.2. Members are requested to consider this issue prior to the Annual Meeting with a view to the Authority being in a position to appoint Chairs of Committees at the Annual meeting.

8. Dates of Meetings

- 8.1. The separate report on this agenda dealing with a draft schedule of dates of meetings has been prepared on the basis of the draft Committee structure being approved, although alternative meeting dates will be provided if necessary. If the draft structure is not approved then amendments or additions to the draft schedule of meetings will be required.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. None arising directly from the report.

Staff Implications

10. There may be some staff implications in that the number of Committees/Sub Committees may reduce overall which will impact upon Officer time.

Legal Implications

11. The Authority is legally required to have certain meetings as set out in paragraph 3 above. The Authority is also required under the Local Government

and Housing Act 1989 to have political balance across its Committees and sub Committees.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. There may be some savings related to a reduced number of Committees and also related to Members' Allowances - which is the subject of another report on this Agenda.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

13. None arising directly from this report.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

14. Membership and structure of the Authority will provide a framework to ensure decisions are made to best reflect the Authority, Service, and the Community it serves.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Constitution 2014/15

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
