

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JULY 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Robbie Ayres (Chair), Cllrs Ray Halpin, Jimmy Mahon, Jean Stapleton, Marianne Welsh and Anthony Boyle

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:

Barbara Murray, Sharon Sullivan and Lesley Rennie

1. Preliminary matters

Members considered the identification of declarations of interest, any urgent additional items, and any business that may require the exclusion of the press and public.

Resolved that:

- a) no declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) no additional items of business to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; 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 held on 21st May 2015 were approved as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Forward Work Plan For The Performance & Scrutiny Committee For 2015/16

Members considered report CFO/066/15 concerning the draft Forward Work Plan (FWP) for the Performance & Scrutiny Committee for 2015/16.

No amendments or additions to the forward work plan were identified. Members were advised that a single-status meeting of the Performance and Scrutiny

Committee for consideration of the Care agenda had been confirmed for 3rd September 2015.

Resolved that:

The Forward Work Plan for the Performance and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2015/16 be approved.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

Members considered Report CFO/063/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning an update on the progress made against the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2013/16.

The Committee also considered the measures being introduced to reduce risk to vulnerable people in Merseyside including the introduction of various assistive technologies such as isolation switches on cookers, and Wi-Fi heat alarms.

Resolved that:

The content of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report be noted.

5. MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY (MFRA) ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

Members considered report CFO/047/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning the progress made in relation to staff engagement following the outcomes of the 2014 Staff Survey.

Members considered the Authority's engagement principles and the commitments for staff engagement. The Committee heard how the Lead Member for Strategy and Performance, Cllr Barbara Murray, had been instrumental in forming the engagement principles in conjunction with staff from all areas of the Authority.

In scrutinising the report, Members were keen to identify that there is a period of change ahead, not just in relation to cuts to funding but also as an example the probable changes to the governance of the City Region which is likely to impact on the Authority. The committee identified a need to keep all staff engaged and informed of any changes that had to be made and explain the reasons for the change in full.

Resolved that:

The MFRA Engagement Principles and Commitments be noted and endorsed.

6. Performance Against New AFA Protocol

Members considered report CFO/064/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer concerning the performance of the new Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Policy since its introduction in October 2012.

Members were reminded of the changes made since the introduction of the new AFA Policy in two stages. Initially not responding to AFA actuations during the day without confirmation of an actual fire and in the second stage expanding this to include not responding during the night. Following consultation and concerns raised by stakeholders certain types of properties were exempt from the policy and any actuation of an AFA would always elicit a full attendance from crews.

The committee considered that, nearly two years since first implementing these measures, it is now only exempted properties that give rise to Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS).

Members scrutinised the targeted approach to repeat offenders to be adopted and the implications this might have. They also examined in depth the implications there may be arising from introducing a policy for charging to recover costs for attending UwFS. It was considered that a policy for charging would not be unreasonable in the current climate of cuts but that this would need further scrutiny.

Resolved that:

- a) The progress of the new AFA Policy in improving the Service's performance in reducing Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS), be noted; and
- b) The rationale of the risk assessment that underpins the protocol, be noted; and
- c) The targeted approach to be adopted in relation to prolific offenders, be noted; and
- d) A review to consider the experience of other Fire and Rescue Authorities who have adopted a charging policy in respect of the potential to positively influence repeat offenders and the financial impact to those Authorities, by the Performance and Scrutiny Committee be commissioned.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 3 September 2015

Signed: _____

Date: _____