

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

23 SEPTEMBER 2014

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Leslie T. Byrom CBE (Chair) Councillors Robbie Ayres, Ted Grannell, Denise Roberts, Jean Stapleton, Dave Hanratty and Linda Maloney

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from: Councillors Peter Brennan, Sharon Sullivan, Tony Newman and Lesley Rennie

8. Chairs Announcements

Prior to the opening of Agenda Business The Chair:

- I. Advised the Committee that Members of the Public were present to record the proceeding of the meeting.
- II. Welcomed Robin Baker Engagement Lead, and Paul Basnett Audit Manager, from Grant Thornton who were present to deliver their findings in relation to Item 3 on the Agenda.

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) Agenda item 7, PFI Project Report for the Period September 2013 – July 2014, contains EXEMPT information by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, therefore 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 Policy and Resources Committee, held on 1st April 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Audit Findings Report

Robin Baker Engagement Lead from Grant Thornton, External Audit, presented a summary of the Audit Findings in support of their report and gave an unqualified decision on the Authority having clear accounts on the basis that the Chair and the Deputy Chief Executive sign the letter of recommendation on behalf of the Authority today.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that this was Robin Baker's final Audit and presentation in relation to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, as he has reached the end of his five year set term.

Robin Baker thanked all officers who have been involved with the Audit Processes, over the five years he has been the appointed Auditor, for their professionalism and polite assistance throughout.

Resolved that:

- a) Members Note the Audit Findings Report of the Authority's External Auditors, Grant Thornton and;
- b) Robin Baker be thanked on behalf of the Authority, for his work over the last five years as external Auditor, and wished well for the future.

4. Statement of Accounts 2013/14 - Authorisation for Issue

(CFO/096/14)

Members considered report CFO/096/14, of the Deputy Chief Executive, regarding the audited Statement of Accounts for 2013/14.

Resolved that:

Members

- a) The audited Statement of Accounts 2013/14, attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved and
- b) The Statement of Accounts 2013/14 be authorised for issue, and
- c) The letter of representation in relation to the 2013/14 accounts, attached as Appendix B, be approved and signed by the Chair and Deputy Chief Executive, on behalf of the Authority.

5. Financial Review 2014/15 - April to June

(CFO/097/14)

Members considered report CFO/097/14, of the Deputy Chief Executive, regarding Financial Review 2014/15 for the period April to June, providing Members with the revenue and capital position, and full health check, of the Authority's finances for the first quarter of year 2014/15.

Members were advised that use of reserves would be maximised to try and avoid compulsory redundancies, and monies would be moved into capital investment reserves to avoid borrowing, and investments split amongst agencies to cover risk as much as possible.

Resolved that:

The contents of the report be noted.

6. The Openness in Local Government Regulations 2014

(CFO/087/14)

Members considered report CFO/087/14 of the Clerk to the Authority, concerning the Openness in Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which came into force on 4th August 2014, and of the impact of the Regulations for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority, in relation to public access to record proceedings of Authority meetings and the recording and publishing of any Delegated Decisions.

The committee were advised that a report will be submitted to a future Authority meeting to approve amendments to the Authority's Constitution following the impact of the Regulations.

Concerns were raised in relation to the Regulations provision for the public to record and publish proceedings of Local Authority meetings, and the possibility of misinterpretation of business discussed, being available in the public domain.

Members were advised that one of the Authority's Corporate Communications team are usually present during meetings of the Authority and would therefore be able to publish articles on behalf of the Authority should the need arise.

Resolved that:

- d) That the Openness in Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, with effect from 4th August 2014, be noted, and
- e) The revised template for Reports to the Authority be noted.

7. **PFI Project - Progress report for the period September 2013 - July 2014**
(CFO/098/14)

Members considered report CFO/098/14 of the Deputy Chief Executive regarding a review of progress on the North West Fire & Rescue Services Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Project over the period from September 2013 – July 2014.

Resolved that:

That the progress on the North West Fire & Rescue Services PFI Project, and the start of the contract management phase, be noted.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 27 November 2014

Signed: _____

Date: _____