

**POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
(Resumed Meeting)**

of the

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

22nd August, 2006

**PRESENT: Councillor Don Prout in the Chair
Councillors Eddie Clein, Kevin Firth, Betty
Lowe MBE, and Tony Newman,**

**Councillors, John George, Jimmy Mahon
Ted Grannell and Isabel Moon also
attended**

**Apologies for absence were received from
Councillor Sharon Sullivan, Vera Best, Dave Hanratty,
Jack Colbert, Tommy Mann, Paula Keaveney, Peter
Johnson, Les Byrom and Linda Maloney,**

30. Preliminary Matters

The Committee considered declarations of interest, items of urgency or items which may require the exclusion of the press and public.

Resolved that:-

- (A) One additional item of business relating to a CFO/161/06 Progress in Respect of Consultation Regarding Proposals to alter staffing levels in the Mobilising and Command and Control Centre to be considered as a matter of urgency as a delay would not be in the interests of the efficient operation of the Service; and
- (B) the press and public be excluded from consideration of the item concerning the Formal Application for the consent of the Attorney General to the issue of Realtor Proceedings on the basis of the exemptions set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the Committee is satisfied that in all the circumstances the public interest in making the exclusion outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

31. Minutes of Last Meeting

Resolved that the proceedings of the last adjourned meeting of the Committee held on 21st August be approved as a correct record and be signed accordingly by the Chair.

32. Response to Strike Action by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

The Committee considered a verbal report from the Chief fire Officer on the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) "Yes" Strike vote, and the preparations ongoing with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

33. Update on Contingency Planning in regard to the Strike action by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

The Committee considered:-

- (1) The letter from HM Fire Service Inspectorate to the Chief Fire Officer commending the Authority on its contingency arrangements in view of the proposed Strike Action by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) as this reassured and gave confidence to the Inspectorate.
- (2) Clarification was sought from the Chief Fire Officer of the numbers of personnel who had elected to provide cover in the present dispute

Resolved that:-

- (A) the Authority notes the letter from HM Fire Service Inspectorate and that the letter is put into the public domain to reassure the people of Merseyside of the proactive approach being taken by the Authority.
- (B) the Authority is provided with a report on the outcome of a meeting between the ACFO and members of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to identify numbers who will be providing cover.
- (C) the Authority to invite the leaders of the five local Councils and Chief Executive Officers to a formal; briefing session from the Chief Fire Officer on Tuesday 29th August at 1830 hrs in Fire Service Headquarters.
- (D) the Chief Fire Officer seek clarification from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) of their adherence to the National agreement for "Recall to Duty" in the event of a major incident being called via "Gold Command".

34. Consideration of Check off Arrangements

The Committee, considered:–

- (1) the proposed letter to be sent out to all Firefighters within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service outlining the intentions of the Authority regarding Check off arrangements. The wording contained within the letter was discussed; and in the light of these issues:-

Resolved that: -

- (A) the letter and its contents are revised in line with the comments from the Committee.
- (B) the cessation of Check off arrangements be approved
- (C) the existing local arrangements be high lighted within the proposed letter.
- (D) the revised letter to be circulated to members before being issued to Firefighters.

35. Update on MACC Consultation Process

The Committee considered as a matter of urgency Chief Fire Officers Report (CFO/161/06) as an addition to the verbal update from the Chief Fire Officer.

- (1) The Chief Fire Officer gave a verbal update to the Committee on the matter and asked for consideration of CFO/161/06. Progress in respect of Consultation Regarding Proposals to alter Staffing Levels in the mobilising and Command and Control Centre. The Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that formal Consultation over the matter was due for completion on 24th August 2006 and in light of these issues the Committee -

Resolved that:-

- (A) the report CFO/161/06 be agreed.
- (B) Councillor Clein wished the thanks of the Committee to recorded for Councillor Moon's work in providing visibility and resolving issues at MACC.
- (C) Councillor Moon wished to express her thanks for the assistance of the ACFO Bill Evans and the CFCO Glynis Lomax as regards their good work at MACC.

- (D) the Committee wished to express their thanks for the work of Councillors Maloney and Lowe (MBE) with reference to the proposed LLAR initiative at Newton le Willows.
- (E) to extend the consultation process for a further two weeks at MACC so as all concerned can have an input to the process.
- (F) that a report be produced for the Authority meeting on the 8th September 2006 outlining the proposals and the progress made as regards MACC staff levels.

36. Confirmation of Part Performance Policy

The Chief Fire Officer gave a verbal, update to the meeting and asked that the concept be reinforced in light of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) decision to strike.

Resolved that the Authority approve:–

- (A) the committee resolved to agree the reinforcement of the Part Performance Policy.

37. Notification of the impact on Industrial Action to Staff

The Committee considered two draft letters to be sent out to all Firefighters within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, highlighting the expectations as regards expected behaviour and the employment position of those involved in the proposed strike action by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU); in light of these issues the Committee resolved to:-

Resolved that the Authority approve that the two draft letters are sent to all Fire fighters including all Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members as a matter of legal requirement to advise the personnel of their position and the expectations of the Authority in relation to the impending strike action.

38. Request for Attorney General's Consent for Realtor Proceedings (exempt Item)

- (1) To consider the attached letter to the Attorney General's Office and copies of letters to the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and copies of CFO/153/06 report and Process Evolution Report, in light of these issues the committee resolved:-
 - (A) (the request for Realtor Proceedings should be forwarded to the Attorney General's Office to seek initial guidance of the validity of the claim submitted by the Authority.

The Meeting was adjourned and to be re-convened on Tuesday 29th August at 1300hrs, to consider any further response or update from the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) Ballot and the Authority's response.

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