

**POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**of the**

**Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority**

**26<sup>th</sup> September, 2005**

**PRESENT:**      **Councillor Albert Smith, Chairman;  
Councillors Les Byrom, Vera Best,  
Kevin Firth, Jimmy Kendrick, Jimmy  
Mahon (as an alternate for Councillor  
Hanratty), Linda Maloney and Don Prout.**

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**Councillors Tony Newman, Peter Johnson,  
Tommy Mann, Ted Grannel and Eddie Clein also  
attended.**

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**An apology for absence was received from  
Isabel Moon**

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**1. Preliminary Matters**

The Committee considered the identification of declarations of interest, items of urgency or items requiring the exclusion of the press and public.

It was noted that:-

- (a) Wirral Councillors namely Don Prout and Peter Johnson declared an interest in Item 11 that related to Wirral Borough Council's administration of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, but that it be noted that Members have also determined that on the basis of the exemptions specified in paragraph 10 (2) of the Members' Code of Conduct, the interest does not constitute a prejudicial interest.
  
- (b) Councillor Peter Johnson also declared an interest in Item 17, Low Level of Activity and Risk – Heswall Fire Station, but that it be noted that he also determined that on the basis of the exemptions specified in paragraph 10 (2) of the Members' Code of Conduct, the interest does not constitute a prejudicial interest.

- (c) Two late items; 19 on Acquisition of Land and 20 on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme be considered on to the agenda. The Chair being of the opinion that the items should be considered as items of urgency as a delay would be prejudiced to the Service.
- (d) Three items: 14, on the New Security Contract at FSHQ and STC; 17 on Low Level of Activity and Risk – Heswall Station (in respect of that part relating to Counsel's opinions and 18 on Financial Management Systems be considered as containing exempt information by virtue of paragraphs 7, 12 and 7 respectively of part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Accordingly the press and public therefore be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of these items of business.

## 2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved that the proceedings of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2005 be approved as a correct record and accordingly were signed as such by the Chairman.

## 3. **Knowsley Borough Council**

The Committee noted the resolution of Knowsley Borough Council in its meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005 that congratulated the Authority's Members and Officers in their achieving the CPA Excellence Authority standard.

## 4. **Rank to Role Implementation/Crew Level Maintenance Team Pilot (CFO/190/05)**

The Committee considered Report CFO/190/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned Rank to Role Implementation/Crew Level Maintenance Team Pilot.

It was resolved that:-

- (a) The recommendations contained within this report be approved; and
- (b) The Chief Fire Officer be requested to enter into consultation with the Representative Bodies over the conditions of service for the Crew Level Maintenance Team (CLMT) prior to implementation of the pilot scheme and move from rank to role, and also that;

- (c) The Chief Fire Officer be requested to report back the outcomes of consultation to the Authority in order that the Authority can consider such matters before making a decision as to whether to implement the proposals.

5. **IRMP – Draft Year 3 Supplement/Action Plan 2006/07**  
(CFO/164/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/164/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned IRMP – Draft Year 3 Supplement/Action Plan 2006/07.

It was resolved that:-

- (i) The IRMP Supplement 2006/07 be approved for issue for public consultation;
- (ii) The public consultation period starts on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005 for a period of 12 weeks;
- (iii) The results of the consultation exercise be reported to the Authority at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2006 for further consideration.

6. **Progress Report on Southport Retained Appliance**  
(CFO/187/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/187/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned the Progress Report on Southport Retained Appliance.

It was resolved that:-

Members note the progress of this IRMP action plan point 45/2004/05 and that a copy of the report be made available for reference at the Southport Area Committee of Sefton Borough Council.

7. **Consultation on the Implementation of Medium Term Strategy for Aerial Appliances**  
(CFO/205/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/205/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that considered consultation on the Medium Term Strategy for Aerial Appliances.

The Authority also received as part of this item in connection with the consultation outcomes described in this report, the Fire Brigades' Union's submission.

It was resolved that the outcomes of the consultation be considered with item 8

8. **Implementation of the Medium Term Strategy for Aerial Appliances**  
(CFO/199/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/199/05 that concerned the implementation of the medium term strategy for Aerial Appliances, the responses to consultation and the comments of the Chief Fire Officer in response to those matters.

It was then resolved that:-

The Authority should proceed to implement the proposals as follows:-

- (a) A response standard of 30 minutes for aerial appliances be adopted.
- (b) A retained crewing system for the aerial appliance at Birkenhead (as approved by Members in Report CFO/107/05) is implemented as soon as possible.
- (c) Subject to the outcome of internal consultation in respect of the aerial appliances at Eccleston and Southport fire stations, for a period of no more than 8 weeks from 26<sup>th</sup> September 2005 (given the budgetary impact of these proposals), the Authority continues to provide 24 hour cover, at the new response standards set out above.
- (d) Proposals as to changes to the arrangements for staffing of the aerial appliances at Eccleston and Southport so that the appliances are staffed on a 'retained basis', to be the subject of a further report to the Authority at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2005 to take account of any changes in its budget setting processes.
- (e) The Chief Fire Officer be requested to provide a detailed report on proposals for the purchase of a Combined Pump Platform (CPP) to replace the aerial appliance at the City Centre station.
- (f) The Chief Fire Officer be requested to undertake a further 12-week consultation exercise in respect of the CPP concept at the City Centre station, and to report back to the Authority in respect of responses to this specific consultation in order that the Authority can consult the proposal further.

9. **Operational Response Motorcycle**  
(CFO/196/05)

This report was withdrawn from the agenda; to be considered at the Community Safety Committee's meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

10. **Special Service Call – Persons Locked Out**  
(CFO/171/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/171/05 that concerned Special Service Calls for Persons Locked Out.

The two options 1 and 2 that were presented in the report were considered in depth following which it was resolved that,

Option 1 be adopted, that means:-

The mobilising order be amended so as to remove all references to a response to persons Locked Out, on all occasions other than when there is a threat of imminent danger or a threat to life and make no charge in such circumstances.

A list of telephone contact numbers for Locksmiths, to be provided and placed in MACC in order to assist members of the public, should they wish to avail themselves of those services.

11. **SLA Pension Services – MF & RS & Wirral Borough Council**  
(CFO/182/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/182/05 that concerned the SLA for Pensions Services made between the Authority and Wirral Borough Council (WBC).

It was resolved that:-

- (a) The Authority support the continued relationship with WBC on the basis that the Pay/Pensions Officer has fully investigated and explored alternative opportunities regarding the technical administration of the Firefighter's Pension Scheme, and
- (b) That the Pay/Pensions Officer be given authorisation to progress the SLA., who will, under the guidance of Legal Service, ensure that the SLA is of a high standard and covers all areas required in order to process pensions in accordance with statutory regulations making certain that the Authority receives 'Best Value' in terms of cost and quality.

12. **Absence and Attendance Policy**  
(CFO/185/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/185/05 that concerned the Absence and Attendance Policy.

It was resolved that:-

- (a) Elected Members endorse the attached policy as the basis for consultation; and
- (b) That Elected Members request the Director of Human Resources to enter into consultation with the appropriate trade unions, and to report back to Members with responses in order that the Authority can consider the policy further, with the intention of implementing a policy with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006.

13. **Redundancy Policy**  
(CFO/184/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/184/05 that concerned the Redundancy Policy; a policy that is required by the ODPM.

It was resolved that:-

- (a) Elected Members endorse the attached Redundancy Policy as the basis for consultation, and that
- (b) they request the Director of Human resources begin consultation with the appropriate trade unions, and delegated powers be granted to the Chief Fire Officer to agree any changes to the attached policy, which he is willing to agree following the consultation.

14. **Revenue Support Grant 2006/07**  
(CFO/206/05)

The Committee considered as an item moved forward on the agenda Report CFO/206/05 that concerned the Revenue Support Grant for 2006/07.

It was resolved that:

- (a) this report be noted, and
- (b) the Authority approve the draft response
- (c) the Authority note and approve the proposed lobbying approach being undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer and the Executive Director of Finance.

15. **Efficiency Statements**  
(CFO/207/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/207/05 which was moved forward up the agenda, that concerned Efficiency Statements required by the ODPM.

It was resolved that:

- (a) The contents of the report be noted, and
- (b) The Executive Director of Finance formulated a detailed response, in consultation with the Chairman of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.

16. **Acquisition of Land**  
(CFO/212/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/212/05 which was moved forward up the agenda, that concerned Acquisition of Land.

It was resolved that:-

The Authority delegated power to the Chief Fire Officer to enter into contractual options for the purchase of local land to build Fire Stations and Operational Resource Centres not exceeding a maximum value of £1 million per site subject to:

- (a) The land being required for Fire & Rescue purposes as a Fire Station or Operational Resource Centre.
- (b) Being at a suitable location for the proposed fire station or operational resource centre use in accordance with the risk management data collected on behalf of the Fire Authority.
- (c) The land being acquired at the best price reasonably obtainable.
- (d) There being sufficient budgetary provision.
- (e) Prior consultation with the Chairman of the Authority.

17. **Firefighters' Pension Scheme**  
(CFO/209/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/209/05 of which had been moved up the Agenda that concerned the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

It was resolved that:-

The report be noted and any comments on the proposed amendments be made. The deadline for comments on the proposed amendments is 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005.

18. **Low Level of Activity and Risk – Heswall Fire Station**  
(CFO/202/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/202.05 that concerned the Low Level of Activity and Risk in regard to Heswall Fire Station.

It was resolved that:

Members adopt the system for staffing and accommodation arrangements as set out in Report CFO/202/05 and approve the proposal to commence the system at Heswall Fire Station subject to the consultation procedures with the representative bodies. A full and detailed proposal regarding the system being attached as Appendix A.

The Committee then excluded the press and public to consider that part of the item consisting of Counsel's advice which was exempt from publication under paragraph 12 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and resolved that the report be noted. The press and public continued to be excluded for the consideration of the remaining two items.

19. **New Security Contract at FSHQ and STC**  
(CFO/204/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/204/05 that concerned the new Security Contract at FSHQ and STC.

It was resolved that:-

The Committee approve the appointment of the OCS Security Services as service provider of security services at FSHQ and the STC for a term of one year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005 (with an option to extend for a further year) at the cost specified in the report.

20. **Financial Management Information System**  
(CFO/191/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/191/05 that concerned Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS)

It was resolved that:-

Subject to final verification of details set out in their tender in relation to disaster recovery and business continuity:

- (a) Approval be given to enter into a contract with Netstore plc for the provision of the Authority's FMIS for a period of five years at a total fixed cost of £970,264, the details of which are set out in Appendix A to this report.

- (b) The total contract value be funded by £255,000 from the provision set aside in the capital programme 2005/06 and 2006/07 and the ongoing annual revenue costs of £143,000 from existing revenue provision for the Authority's FMIS;
- (c) An option be included within the contract for the Authority to extend the term on a year-by-year basis up to a maximum of an additional three years should it choose to exercise that option;
- (d) Netstore plc be contracted to provide and support all elements of the hosted FMIS service, which will include support for:
  - (i) Payroll systems, processed using Delphi Millennium software supplied by Midland HR and Payroll Solutions Ltd; and
  - (ii) Financial systems, processed using e-Financials software supplied by Cedar Software Ltd;
- (e) Approval be given for the Executive Director of Finance, ICT and Procurement to agree terms and conditions and associated Service Level Agreements with Netstore, together with a detailed implementation plan designed to deliver real system improvements while minimising the risks and potential disruption that may arise from the changes planned;
- (f) Contractual terms and conditions be concluded as soon as possible so that the new contract is in place and commences from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005; and
- (g) Progress in relation to implementation of the new systems be included as part of the regular financial reviews submitted to Policy and Finance Committee until the FMIS Project is concluded.