

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

of the

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

15th December, 2005

**PRESENT: Councillor Albert Smith in the Chair;
Councillors Dave Hanratty, Linda
Maloney, Don Prout, Les Byrom, and
Kevin Firth.**

**Councillors Eddie Clein, Jack Colbert and Peter
Johnson also attended.**

**Apologies for absence were received from
Councillors Jimmy Mahon and Isabel Moon.**

32. Preliminary Matters

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

Resolved that:-

- (A) two reports CFO/259/05, 'Bid for PFI Credits (Fire & Rescue Service Fifth Bidding Round)' and CFO/260/05 'Draft Local Government Grant Settlement 2006/7 and Impact on Medium Term Financial Plans', be considered as matters of urgency, delay of which would not be in the interests of the Service; and
- (B) the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the report CFO/259/05 'Ensuring Continuity' because of the possibility of disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

33. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved that the proceedings of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 10th November, 2005 be approved as a correct record and be signed accordingly by the Chairman.

34. Bassie v MFRA Appeal Result and its Impact upon the Service
(CFO/257/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/257/05 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the Bassie v MFRA Appeal result and its impact upon the Service.

Resolved that –

- (A) the report be noted, and
- (B) the Committee be informed of any further significant claims outstanding or made in the future, where there may be an adverse financial impact upon the Authority above that for which financial provision has been made, or where the claim may have policy or operational implications for the Authority if successful

35. The Vision and Mission Statements of the Authority
(CFO/245/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/245/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerns the Authority's Vision and Mission Statements.

Resolved that a revised Vision Statement and Mission Statement which reflects a specific commitment to make Merseyside safer, particularly in relation to fires be adopted as follows:

Vision: To make Merseyside safer.

Mission: "We will work in partnership with the community to provide a value for money service which will:

- reduce death, injury and loss of property due to fire and protect the people and the environment, including visitors to the region.
- provide a high quality fire and rescue service within the resources available and in accordance with Best Value principles."

36. Firefighters' Pension Scheme: Early Retirements, Financial Year 2005-2006 (Two Quarters: April – September)
(CFO/247/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/247/05, of the Executive Director of Law & HR that concerned the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, Early Retirements, Financial Year 2005-2006 (Two Quarters: April – September).

Resolved that the Report be noted.

37. Options For Amalgamations of Police Forces
(CFO/252/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/252/05 of the Chief Fire Officer sought to advise it of options for amalgamation of Police Forces.

Resolved that:the Chief Fire Officer send a formal response to the Chief Constable of Merseyside supporting the position of the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Merseyside Police Authority in respect of the force restructure proposals as stated in their joint letter of 8th December 2005 to the Home Secretary

38. Audit Commission – Consultation on Proposed Work Programme and Fee Scales
(CFO/253/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/253/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that sought to bring to its attention, the Audit Commission's – Consultation on Proposed Work Programme and Fee Scales.

Resolved that the Report be noted, and the action of the Chief Fire Officer in requesting the Audit Commission to cap its fee increases at a maximum of 5% be approved.

39. Speke Workshops – Roof Repairs
(CFO/233/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/233/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned Roof Repairs at Speke Workshops.

Resolved that:

- (A) the works be put out to tender with a view to appointing a specialist contractor who would provide a new plastisol coated insulated pressed steel pitched roof to the Speke Workshop building, and a contract be awarded in accordance with the Authority's contract standing orders
- (B) that upon the completion of this roofing work, the interior environment be cleaned up, and this cleaning up work would include additional works that would prevent, or at least minimise, the ingress of potentially harmful airborne substances, that are allegedly discharged from local industrial premises.

40. ICT Report 1st April to 30th September, 2005
(CFO/256/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/256/05 of the Executive Director of Finance, ICT and Procurement, which considered ICT performance as a whole from 1st April to 30th September, 2005.

Resolved that the Report be noted.

41. Embedding Excellence
(CFO/250/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/250/05 of the Executive Director of Law & HR that concerned Embedding Excellence.

Resolved that the strategy for Embedding Excellence as set out in the report be approved.

42. Child Care Vouchers
(CFO/239/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/239/05 of the Executive Director of Law & HR that concerned the introduction of Child Care Vouchers for employees from February 2006.

Resolved that the scheme for the supply of Childcare Vouchers for employees through "Busy Bees", the preferred supplier of such a scheme, be implemented from February 2006.:

43. Member Champion for Training & Development
(CFO/258/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/258/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned the appointment of a Member Champion for Training & Development.

Resolved that the Chairman of the Authority be appointed as Member Champion for Training and Development.

44. Implementation of the Medium Term Strategy for Appliances
(CFO/236/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/236/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned the implementation of the Medium Term Strategy for Aerial Appliances.

Resolved that –

- (A) the Authority adopts the provision of retained staffing for the aerial appliances located at Ecclestone and Southport. The target date for implementation to be the end of January/early February 2006, and
- (B) the Authority adopts a response time for aerial appliances of 30 minutes on 90% of occasions (which is one of the highest in the country).

45. Bid for PFI Credits (Fire & Rescue Service Fifth Bidding Round)
(CFO/259/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/259/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that considered the Bid for PFI Credits (Fire and Rescue Service Fifth Bidding Round).

Resolved that -:

- (A) the award of PFI Credits for investment in Fire Authority properties be noted; and
- (B) the Chief Fire Officer be requested to report back in more detail on the next steps and project management arrangements.

46. Draft Local Government Grant Settlement 2006/7 and Impact on Medium Term Financial Plans
(CFO/260/05)

The Committee considered the Report CFO/260/05 of the Chief Fire Officer that concerned the Draft Local Government Grant Settlement 2006/7 and its impact on medium term financial plans.

Resolved that -

- (A) the report be noted and in particular paragraph 18.3 which sets out the current projected deficit as being in excess of £7 million, which is around 9.3% of our budget, and
- (B) the outline strategy for response proposed in line with the Authority's medium term financial strategy be approved, and
- (C) the three party leaders be requested to determine at a meeting on 9 January 2006, the arrangements they would wish for agreeing a detailed submission and strategy.

47. Ensuring Continuity
(CFO/254/05)

Before this Report was considered, all members of the press, public and all officers, with the exception of the Committee Clerk, left the room.

The Committee then considered the Report CFO/254/05, regarding arrangements for ensuring continuity.

Resolved that the original decision of the Committee in this matter, taken on 28th July 2005, be re-affirmed and consequently the arrangements for 2006/07 be continued, as varied by an amendment to the date of relevant payments from 6th April 2006 to 1st April 2006.

Note: This resolution was passed by 3 votes to 1 with Councillor K. Firth recording his dissent
