

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

of the

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

10th November, 2005

**PRESENT: Councillor Albert Smith, Chair;
Councillors Vera Best, Les Byrom, Eddie
Clein (as an alternate for Councillor
Kendrick), Dave Hanratty and Linda
Maloney.**

**Councillors Tony Newman, Tommy Mann and
Isabel Moon also attended.**

**Apologies for absence were received from
Councillors Kevin Firth, Jimmy Kendrick and Don
Prout.**

21. 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) five items relating to Firebuy, Annual Efficiency Statements, the World Firefighters' Games, the ODPM Select Committee Inquiry and Industrial Action in West Midlands be considered as matters 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 the meeting during consideration of the item relating to possible industrial action in West Midlands because of the possibility of disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

22. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved that the proceedings of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 26th September, 2005 be approved on a correct record and be signed accordingly by the Chair.

23. Second Quarter Review of 2005/06 Service Plan
(CFO/208/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/208/05 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the achievement of second quarter service plan objectives for 2005/06.

Resolved that the performance against the Service Plan of the Authority for 2005/06 be noted.

24. Financial Review 2005/06 – Second Quarter
(CFO/223/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/223/05 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the financial position, both revenue and capital, for the Authority for 2005/06.

Resolved that the details set out in the report be noted and the variations to the 2005/06 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme be approved.

25. Family Friendly Policies
(CFO/225/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/225/05 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning policies relating to the role of partners and other family members in supporting officers and elected Members in the course of the performance of official duties.

Resolved that the Committee approves the policy relating to partner and family member support to officers and elected Members during the performance of their official duties on the basis set out in Report CFO/225/05 of partner and family members:-

- (A) providing active and appropriate support; and
- (B) individually meeting the costs of all such support where they occur but of there being no cost implications to such individuals where there are no additional costs to the Authority in respect of their support.

26. Carbon Trust Grant – Local Authority Energy Finance Scheme
(CFO/228/05)

The Committee considered Report CFO/228/05 of the Chief Fire Officer concerning progress in relation to the Local Authority Energy Finance Scheme following the receipt of funding from the Carbon Trust pilot project which is intended to enable authorities to establish a long-term investment strategy in energy efficiency within their estates.

Resolved that the progress made be noted and the proposal to appoint an "Energy Efficiency" Member Champion be approved and the Authority consider such an appointment following discussion with potential candidates for the role.

27. Firebuy Limited

The Committee considered a verbal report of the Chief Fire Officer concerning invitations for senior officers or Members to apply for appointment as Board Members of Firebuy Limited, a role requiring two days work per month.

Resolved that any officer or Member who did wish to apply for this position be supported by the Authority and be authorised to retain any payment associated with the role if appointed.

28. Annual Efficiency Statements

The Committee considered a verbal report of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the requirement of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to submit Annual Efficiency Statements by the revised deadline date of 17th November, 2005.

Resolved that the Chief Fire Officer be requested to forward the statements as soon as they are finalised to all elected Members by email with an invitation for immediate comment and subject to the receipt of any such comments be authorised to submit the documents to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the required deadline.

29. World Firefighters' Games

The Committee considered a supplement to Report CFO/224/05 as submitted to the meeting of the Community Safety Committee held on 27th October, 2005 and concerning additional information relating to the proposed roles of Members participating in the visit to Hong Kong being undertaken at the time of the World Firefighters' Games 2006.

Resolved that the detailed information contained in the supplementary report be noted and the opportunity for any Members to undertake public speaking engagements during the visit to publicise the Service and/or the Firefighters' Games to be held in Merseyside in 2008, be investigated.

30. Select Committee Inquiry

The Committee considered a verbal report of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the announcement on 8th November of the establishment by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of a Select Committee Inquiry into various aspects of the Fire Service and their invitation for interested organisations and individuals to submit evidence.

Resolved that the Chief Fire Officer be requested to prepare a draft response to the Inquiry for submission to Members for approval within the appropriate timescale with a view to submitting such a response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with an invitation for the Select Committee to visit Merseyside to inspect the Control Centre and also learn about the many Community Fire Safety initiatives which are being undertaken by the Service.

31. Fire Cover in the West Midlands

The Committee considered a verbal report of the Chief Fire Officer concerning the possibility of imminent industrial action being taken by members of the Fire Brigades Union in the West Midlands and the arrangements that West Midlands Fire Service is making for fire cover in that area in the event that such industrial action does proceed.

Resolved that the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to provide three reserve Fire Appliances for the use of West Midlands Fire Service in the event that industrial action does take place.
