

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

HELD ON 12th FEBRUARY 2015

Present:

Councillor David Acton (Chairman), Councillor Tommy Judge (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Mohammed Ayub, Walter Brett, Lynda Byrne, Basil Curley, Jim Dawson, Jim Ellis, Grace Fletcher-Hackwood, Daniel Hawthorne, Derek Heffernan, Barrie Holland, Bernard Judge, Iain Lindley, Amna Mir, John O'Brien, Shaun O'Neill, Brian Rigby, Michael Smith, Stella Smith, Fred Walker, Lisa Walker, Steve Williams, Paul Wild and Michael Whetton

Also in Attendance: Steve McGuirk (County Fire Officer & Chief Executive), Donna Hall (Clerk to the Authority, Wigan Council), Jim Owen (Deputy County Fire Officer), Ged Murphy (Director of Finance and Technical Services), Andrew Taylor (Assistant Director of Resources, Wigan Council), Gwynne Williams (Deputy Clerk and Authority Solicitor), Shelley Wright (Director of Corporate Communications) and Donna Parker (Democratic Services Manager)

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bell (Deputy Chairman), June Hitchen, Afia Kamal, Alan Matthews and George Wilson.

71. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th December 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In consultation with the Independent Person a dispensation had been granted to all Members to participate and vote at meetings of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority (GMFRA), any Committee or Sub-Committee of GMFRA and any joint committee or joint sub-committee on which the Authority is represented in respect of matters relating to setting GMFRA's precept (and matters directly related to such decisions, including GMFRA's budget calculations). This was granted on the grounds that without the dispensation the number of Members prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business (Section 33(2)(a) of the Localism Act 2011)(Minute 80 refers).

73. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

There were no items of urgent business submitted.

74. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chairman reminded all Members that they were invited to attend the GMFRS Future Fire Fighting Event Working Dinner on Wednesday 25th February from 6.30pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Manchester also the main Conference on Thursday 26th February at the Training and Development Centre, Manchester. The purpose of the event was to present, demonstrate and discuss how GMFRS were embracing new technologies which support the ambition to advance firefighting methods, reduce the risk to operational crews and improve firefighter safety, whilst ensuring it was underpinned by public value. The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive requested Members to note that this conference may be cancelled pending the announcement of future strike dates (Minute 82 – Pensions Update Dispute refers)
2. The Chairman advised that as previously agreed at the last meeting of the Authority, the Policy Standing Sub-Committee would be meeting on Thursday 19th February with regard to the appointment of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive. The assessment process would be taking place on Friday 13th February 2015.
3. The Chairman advised that Lucy Powell MP for Manchester Central was meeting with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman of the Authority and County Fire Officer and Chief Executive on Thursday 19th February at Moss Side Fire Station to discuss the new Community Risk Invention Team (CRIT) project and view the CRIT vehicles.
4. The Chairman advised that Lyn Brown MP, Shadow Minister for Fire and Communities, was meeting with the Chairman and County Fire Officer and Chief Executive on Wednesday 18th February to learn more about GMFRS and to discuss future Labour Party policy options for fire and rescue services.

75. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

There were no questions submitted.

76. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 22 JANUARY 2015 OF SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Service Delivery Committee held on 22nd January 2015 were submitted (Appendix 1).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Service Delivery Committee held on 22nd January 2015, be approved.

77. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 29 JANUARY 2015 OF POLICY, RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 29th January 2015 were submitted (Appendix 2).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 29th January 2015, be approved.

78. SHORT FILM TO BE SHOWN ON THE WORK OF GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE IN 2014

The Director of Corporate Communications provided an introduction to the short film that was shown which highlighted the work GMFRS had undertaken during 2014. It was reported that the footage was available to view on Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo.

Resolved: That the update on the work undertaken by GMFRS in 2014, be noted.

79. TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT, CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 TO 2017/18, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer which sought approval of the Authority's Treasury Management Policy and set out the requirements to determine prudential indicators for the forthcoming financial year 2015/16. The detail contained within the report was consistent with the 'Budget Strategy Report 2015/16 and Medium Term Forecast 2015/16 to 2017/18 (Policy, Resources and Performance Committee Minute 58 refers).

It was noted that this report had also been considered at the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee on 29th January 2015 (Policy, Resources and Performance Minute 55 refers). However, a slightly updated version of the report had been submitted to this meeting.

Resolved: That:

1. The Treasury Management Policy Statement for 2015/16, be adopted.
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2015/16, be adopted.
3. The various Prudential Indicators, as detailed within the report, be approved.

80. REVENUE BUDGET AND PRECEPTS 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer which recommended the setting of the Revenue Budget for 2015/16 as required under Section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (updated in the Localism Act 2011)

and the precepts and relevant levels of Council Tax required under Sections 40, 42B and 47 of the Act.

It was reported that the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 29th January 2015 had considered the Authority's budget in detail and the Committee made certain recommendations in respect of the Budget Strategy based upon accepting the freeze grant offered for 2015/16 and no increase to the precept in 2015/16. On the assumption that the recommendations detailed in the report were acceptable and the report set out the necessary resolutions and statements to be approved by the Authority in order to set the budget and precept for 2015/16.

Members had an in-depth discussion on the proposals, as detailed in the report, with specific regard to District Council tax bases and surpluses or deficits on Collection Funds together with the position on the Authority's share of Retained Business Rates.

Resolved: That:

1. The Revenue Estimates in accordance with the summary submitted for 2015/16, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be approved.
2. The Authority had calculated the amount of 690,371 as its Council Tax base for the year 2015/16, being the aggregate of the tax bases calculated by the Districts, as detailed in Appendix C of the report, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 made under Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, be noted.
3. The following amounts to be calculated in accordance with Sections 42A to 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, be approved:-
 - (a) £111,204,616 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A (2) (a) to (d) thereof (Appendix 'B')
 - (b) £71,411,631 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A (3) (a) to (b) thereof (Appendix 'B')
 - (c) £39,792,984 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Authority, in accordance with Section 42A (4) of the Act, being its budget requirement for the year (Appendix 'B')
 - (d) £57.64 being the amount at (c) above all divided by the amount at paragraph 19 of the report, calculated by the Authority, in accordance with Section

42B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (Appendix 'D').

(e) Valuation Bands

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£38.42	£44.83	£51.23	£57.64	£70.44	£83.25	£96.06	£115.28

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Band D, calculated by the Authority, in accordance with Section 47(i) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (f) The Amounts (precepts) payable by each Billing Authority are as detailed at Appendix 'E', calculated as being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (d) by the tax bases calculated by Districts in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, adjusted for surpluses and deficits on District Collections Funds.

81. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which sought approval of the Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16 in accordance with Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16 set out the Authority's policies in relation to the pay of its workforce. Members were advised that the Pay Policy Statement did not supersede the responsibilities and duties placed on the Authority in its role as an employer under employment law. A copy of the Statement for 2015/16 was attached at Appendix A of the report, for reference.

The Chairman advised that GMFRA supported the concept of the living wage for staff earning less than £7.85 per hour (outside London) and sought approval to adopt this approach as policy going forward.

It was reported that GMFRA was required to produce and approve its Pay Policy Statement before 31st March each year and make it available to the public on its website. The Statement may be amended by resolution of the full Authority during the year to which it relates.

Resolved: That:

1. The Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16, as detailed at Appendix A of the report, be approved and published accordingly.

2. The concept of the living wage for staff earning less than £7.85 per hour (outside London), be adopted as Authority Policy.

82. PENSIONS DISPUTE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided an update on the pensions dispute and outlined the impact on the availability of fire appliances within GMFRS due to Action Short of Strike (ASOS) called by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). The report also provided the average response time data for first appliances during the period April 2014 to January 2015.

It was reported that the number of appliances affected reduced significantly in November due to the fact that ASOS was lifted and personnel took up Additional Hours. The effect on ASOS then impacted in December 2014 and January 2015 due to the reinstatement of ASOS. The fact that Roster Reserve hours were utilised in the early part of the year to maintain appliances availability meant that the Emergency Response Hub were not able to call in the required number of people on Roster Reserve in the later part of the year.

In addition to the report the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive advised that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had held a 'Recall Conference' in Manchester on 10th February 2015. At the conference it was announced that further industrial action would be taking place in the near future, however, fixed date(s) had not been announced as yet. Also 'Action Short of Strike' (ASOS) was still in place and there had been no indication as to whether it would be lifted in the near future. In light of the above, County Guard arrangements would be implemented if industrial action was called and the Emergency Fire Crews had been advised of the current situation accordingly.

The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive advised that the FBU felt that they had been misguided by the wording used by the Fire Minister in the House of Commons debate on the new pension regulations. The new regulations were due to come into effect from 1st April 2015, however, to date fire and rescue services had not been notified of the employer's contribution. The Chairman advised that the Local Government Association (LGA) Employers had sought independent legal advice and had been informed that a guarantee of a full unreduced pension could not be offered without a change to the Firefighters pension legislation.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 9 of the report and advised that the paragraph should be amended to read 'The Director of Emergency Response gave a presentation to the meeting of the Authority on 16th October 2014 which advised that a decision had been taken, as part of the 'Degradation Plan' to stand down four appliances to reduce the impact of ASOS later in the roster year'

Resolved: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The amendment to paragraph 9 of the report, be noted.

83. CHIEF OFFICER'S ACTIVITY REPORT QUARTER 3 (1ST OCTOBER TO 31ST DECEMBER 2014)

The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive presented the 'Chief Officer's Activity Report' for Quarter 3 2014/15 – 1st October to 31st December 2014, for Members' information and comments. The report provided Members with information on the wide ranging activities which had taken place across the Boroughs during this period and also provided an update on the following subject matters:-

- General News;
- Operational Incidents;
- Service Delivery;
- Prevention and Protection;
- Corporate Communications.

Members had a detailed discussion on the content of the report and the activity which had taken place across the Service in Quarter 3. Reference was made to the good work that was taking place at the first joint emergency services hub that been launched in Irlam which involved Greater Manchester Police, North West Ambulance Service operating from Irlam Fire Station alongside GMFRS on a daily basis.

Resolved: That the 'Chief Officer's Activity Report' for Quarter 3 2014/15 – 1st October to 31st December 2014 and comments raised, be noted.

84. THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS CONCORDAT: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided an overview of the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat including an outline of the expectations of its signatories and an update on GMFRS activity within the associated action plan.

It was reported that the Concordat was written by the Department of Health and some of the Concordat signatories; and published in February 2004. The document detailed how organisations could work together better to make sure that people get the help they need when they were having a mental health crisis.

GMFRA were not currently a signatory to the Concordat, however, through the development of initiatives such as the 'Salford Integrated Prevention Hub (SIPH), the Community Risk Intervention Team's (CRIT) and the proactive work of the Health and Social Care Coordinators and Area management

teams, GMFRA was already heavily involved in supporting people living with mental health issues. Becoming a signatory to the Concordat would reinforce and make even more public, GMFRA's existing commitment to support those in local communities that live with mental health issues. As a signatory to the Concordat GMFRA need not alter its current approach but just continue to develop its engagement with communities and partners.

Resolved: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The Authority become a formal signatory to the 'Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat'.

85. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2015/16

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk to the Authority which sought approval to the proposed Timetable of Authority and Committee meetings for the 2015/16 municipal year.

Resolved: That the proposed Timetable of Meetings for the 2015/16 municipal year, be approved.

CHAIRMAN