

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AUTHORITY**

HELD ON 3rd DECEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillor David Acton (Chairman), Councillor Tommy Judge (Vice-Chairman), Councillors John Bell (Deputy Chairman), Mohammed Ayub, Walter Brett, Sharon Briggs, Lynda Byrne, Basil Curley, Jim Dawson, Jim Ellis, Grace Fletcher-Hackwood, Daniel Hawthorne, Derek Heffernan, June Hitchen, Barrie Holland, Afia Kamal, Iain Lindley, Amna Mir, John O'Brien, Shaun O'Neill, Michael Smith, Fred Walker, Paul Wild, Steve Williams, Michael Whetton and John Wright

Also in Attendance: Peter O'Reilly (County Fire Officer and Chief Executive), Donna Hall (Clerk to the Authority, Wigan Council), Paul Argyle (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)

Guest: Robin Baker, Associate Director – Grant Thornton UK LLP

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bernard Judge, Stephen Coen, Alan Matthews and Brian Rigby MBE.

58. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Authority held on 15th October 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

60. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

There were no items of urgent business submitted.

61. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chairman advised that the meeting of the Fire Authority was going to be 'live streamed' and would be available to the public via YouTube to watch either live or retrospectively.

2. The Chairman advised that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Authority along with the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Technical Services would be meeting with Trade Union Representatives at the rise of the meeting to discuss the budget outlook for 2016/17. He advised that no reference to the Fire and Rescue Services budget was given in the Comprehensive Spending Review Announcement on 25th November 2015, this detail was now expected by 18th December 2015.
3. The Chairman advised that a Member Training and Development Session on 'Operational Intelligence' was taking place at the rise of the meeting and would be hosted by the Protection Department and encouraged all Members to attend.
4. The Chairman advised that all Members were invited to attend the 'Moss Side Fire Station Amateur Boxing Show' on Saturday 5th December from 12.00noon to 5.00pm.
5. The Chairman invited all Members to attend the Passing-Out Event for the new Firefighter Recruits on Thursday 14th January 2016 at 1.00pm at the Training and Development Centre, Manchester. The Lord Lieutenant would also be in attendance.
6. The Chairman advised that all Fire and Rescue Authorities had received a letter from the Fire Brigades Union dated 1st December 2015 which advised on the Pension Scheme Transitional Protection Employment Tribunal Cases and the potential timescale for Employment Tribunal cases up to spring 2017. The letter also advised on the decision of the FBU's Executive Council that no further strikes would be called in relation to the existing trade dispute on pensions while the legal challenge was pursued and confirmed that no strike action would be called before June 2017.
7. The Chairman advised that GMFRS had been successful in achieving the award for 'Serving the Community - Best Organisation' category at the WOW! Awards Gala Ceremony for the second year running. The event took place on Monday 23rd November 2015 in London and the Director of Corporate Communications and Councillor Tommy Judge in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Authority attended the event.
8. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank all Crews, Officers and support staff for the hard work on 29th November 2015 when the bad weather hit Greater Manchester. The Command Support Unit was stood-up and 126 calls were received in 3 hours.

62. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

There were no questions submitted.

63. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2015 OF POLICY, RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 19th November 2015 were submitted (Appendix 1).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 19th November 2015, be approved.

64. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID YEAR REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer which reviewed the operation and exercise of delegated Treasury Management powers. The report covered the first six months of 2015/16, considered the prospects for the remainder of the financial year, set out the Authority's Counter Party list (the organisations with which the Authority could place its surplus funds) and explained how the lending list was drawn up.

The Treasurer reported that at 30th September 2015 the Authority's cash balances stood at £37.595m and that the cash balances were expected to end the year around £14m. However, Members would appreciate that whilst the forecasted cash balances represented the current best assessment, it was almost impossible to forecast these to a high degree of accuracy as there were significant items which might impact on this position. The Treasurer advised that since the preparation of the committee report DCLG had confirmed that payment would be funded by DCLG in January 2016 for the £6m pension payment to former firefighters as a direct result of the *Gad v Milne* case.

In addition, it was reported that the Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2015/16 was £34.826m. The Authority had borrowings of £7.126m and had utilised £27.700m of cashflow funds in lieu of borrowing. This was a prudent and cost effective approach in the current climate and required ongoing monitoring. The Authority currently held loans totalling £0.700m and there were no loans due to mature during the 2015/16 financial year.

The report was submitted to the meeting of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee on Thursday 19th November 2015 (Minute 37 refers).

Resolved: That the report be accepted and comments be noted.

65. ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER FOR GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

Robin Baker from Grant Thornton UK LLP attended the meeting and presented the Annual Audit Letter report summarising the key findings arising from the work they had carried out at the Authority for the year ended 31st March 2015.

The Letter was intended to communicate key messages to the Authority and external stakeholders, including members of the public in accordance with the Audit Plan annual work programme which was agreed by the Committee on 18th June 2015 (Minute 42 refers) and included the following audit areas:

- Financial Statements Audit (including audit opinion);
- Value for Money (VfM) Conclusion;
- Whole of Government Accounts;
- Audit Fee;
- Additional work, including tax advisory services and helpline.

And looking forward;

- Governance changes arising from the planned devolution of powers to Greater Manchester as a result of the Authority becoming part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) under the Elected Mayor.

The report was submitted to the meeting of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee on Thursday 26th November 2015 (Minute 21 refers).

Councillor Derek Heffernan made reference to a key message detailed within the VfM Conclusion which read as follows 'The Authority and its partners are working together to address the financial and operational challenges they face from Greater Manchester devolution plans. The scale of creativity and ambition included in the programme is unprecedented and significant change will be delivered'. In response, Donna Hall, Clerk, advised that other organisations such as Health were learning from the GMFRS approach on 'Devo Manc' and going forward further work could take place in influencing partner organisations.

In conclusion, the Chairman advised that the report was very positive and thanked Officers both at Wigan Council and GMFRS for all the hard work that had taken place on the finances over the last 12 months.

Resolved: That the content of the Annual Audit Letter for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority for the year ended 31st March 2015 be noted.

66. CHIEF OFFICER'S ACTIVITY REPORT QUARTER 2 (1ST JULY 2015 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2015)

The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive presented the 'Chief Officer's Activity Report' for Quarter 2 2015/16 – 1st July to 30th September 2015, for Members' information and comments.

The report provided information on the wide ranging activities which had taken place across the Boroughs during this period. The report also provided an update on the following subject matters:-

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

Members' welcomed the informative report and specific reference was made to the new Community Room at Agecroft Fire Station, the work undertaken by Firefighters at Moss Side Fire Station who assisted in an initiative aimed at homeless people and how firefighters had successfully been responding to cardiac arrests since 15th September 2015 working closely with North West Ambulance Service.

Resolved: That the 'Chief Officer's Activity Report' for Quarter 2 2015/16 – 1st July to 30th September 2015, including the comments raised, be noted.

67. QUARTER TWO PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2015-16

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which presented and sought approval of the Service's Quarter 2 Performance against the development and delivery goals contained within the 2015/18 Integrated Risk Management / Corporate Plan.

Members were advised that GMFRS had maintained strong performance into the second quarter of 2015/16. The main outcomes were that 3173 fires had been recorded that was 166 below the quarterly target and 7.84% lower than the same period in 2014/15. There had been a total of 1213 special service calls which represented a 28.22% increase when compared to the same period last year and 3319 false alarms recorded that was a 3.71% reduction on the same period last year. Sadly there had been 3 fire related fatalities during this period. The summary of progress against Quarter 2 scheduled activities from the directorate plans was detailed at Appendix A with exceptions only detailed at Appendix B of the report.

Appendix C of the report provided an overview of Quarter 2 performance against the Service's key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets approved by the Fire Authority on 23rd April 2015 (Minute 101 refers). A general summary of progress against each measure was provided in the report.

Members welcomed the informative report and raised a number of comments and questions relating to the number of deaths and serious injuries from Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and the increase in the number of injuries and deaths from fire compared with Quarter 2 in 2014/15. In response, the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive advised that in relation to RTC's the work with partners relating to prevention and protection activity in this area was reported to the Service Delivery Committee as part of the Prevention and Protection Activity Report and a Road Safety Strategy had been implemented. The increase in the number of deaths, injuries, accidental dwelling fires and deliberate fires compared to 2014/15 were following a reduction in the resources applied to prevention activity caused by cuts to the budget and was being closely monitored by the Director of Prevention and Protection.

Donna Hall, Clerk, advised that since the introduction of integrated working between the local authority, health and fire and rescue there had been a 30% reduction in unplanned hospital admissions in Wigan, therefore, proving value for money.

In conclusion, the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive advised that Doctor Martin McShane from NHS (England) - National Medical Director for Long Term Conditions, had visited GMFRS on 19th November 2015 and as part of his visit he had the opportunity to shadow Community Advisors on a Safe and Well Visit and attended an incident with fire crews. He commented on the empathy of staff within the service and the good work that was taking place across the Service.

Resolved: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The Quarter Two Performance against the development and delivery goals contained within the 2015/18 Integrated Risk Management / Corporate Plan, be noted and the outturn, be approved.

CHAIRMAN