

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMITTEE

HELD ON 12th JULY 2012

Present:

Councillor John O'Brien (Chairman), Councillor Lynda Byrne (Vice-Chairman), Councillors David Acton, John Bell, Derek Heffernan, Tommy Judge, Iain Lindley, Wendy Meikle, Shelia Newman, Shaun O'Neill, Fred Walker, Lisa Walker and Steve Williams

Also in Attendance: Paul Argyle (Director of Emergency Response), Gwynne Williams (Deputy Clerk and Authority Solicitor), Sean Booth (Area Manager - Head of Operational Training), Andy Brookes (Area Manager - Head of Resource Management), Warren Pickstone (Area Manager - Head of Resilience and Planning) and Donna Parker (Democratic Services Manager)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Grace Fletcher-Hackwood and Alan Matthews.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th April 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

4. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

1. The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome Councillors Derek Heffernan, Grace Fletcher-Hackwood (in her absence), Sheila Newman, Shaun O'Neill and Lisa Walker to their first meeting of this Committee.
2. The Chairman advised Members that for the 2nd year running an 'Emergency Services Open Day' would be taking place on Wednesday 22nd August 2012 at the Trafford Centre outside the Orient from 10.00am till 5.00pm. The day had been arranged to showcase emergency services from across Greater Manchester and the North West and launch the GMFRS Community Safety Events Vehicle. All Members were encouraged to attend.
3. The Chairman advised Members that a 'Member Training and Development Session – A Day at a Specialist Station' would be taking

place on Thursday 13th September from 9.30am at Heywood Fire Station. All Members were encouraged to attend.

5. INTRODUCTION TO THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIRECTORATE

The Director of Emergency Response gave a presentation on the work and management of the Emergency Response Directorate and the rationale for bringing various parts of the Service into the scope of this Directorate.

Members were advised that Operational Training now formed part of the Emergency Response Directorate following a recent review of People and Organisational Development. Therefore, in order to effectively manage the Directorate a restructure had been implemented which had seen the introduction of a fourth Area Manager back into the Directorate.

The presentation included an explanation of the following:-

- An outline of the Directorate and the interim structure;
- The role and areas of responsibility of Officers within the Directorate including the introduction of the four Area Managers;
- The relationship of the Directorate and the Action Planning process;
- Development Goals.

A copy of the Emergency Response Structure was circulated, for Members' reference.

Members asked a series of questions regarding the working practices of the Directorate that were answered accordingly.

Resolved: That the presentation and comments raised be noted.

6. EMERGENCY RESPONSE - DEVELOPMENT GOALS PROGRESS

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which set out the current status and progress made against the Corporate Plan development goals for which the Emergency Response Directorate had responsibility since the last meeting.

Members asked a series of questions on the content of the report that was answered accordingly.

Recommended: That the content of the report and comments raised, be noted.

7. DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 AND DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7

Warren Pickstone, Area Manager - Head of Resilience and Planning, gave a presentation on Development Goal (DV6) 'Introduction of Special Rescue Stations to focus our expertise and pursue excellence in service delivery' and

(DV7) 'Review the current arrangement for Urban Search and Rescue, and their relationship with International Search And Rescue capabilities'.

The report identified four options for delivering a specialist response capability in GMFRS which had been achieved through the use of recognised best practice and the translation of knowledge, experience and intelligence. It was reported that a specific element of a Specialist Response Capability revolved around a 'technical capability' and the terminology for a proposed team within GMFRS was a 'Technical Response Unit' (TRU).

Members were advised that 'Option 2 – A Technical Response Unit (TRU) at both Ashton-under-Lyne Fire Station and Leigh Fire Station with a Firefighting Capability' was the preferred option and would satisfy the requirements of Development Goal 6 and 7 most completely. Local informal consultation had begun with key stakeholders, including the Fire Brigade Union and if accepted an integral part of the plan would be stakeholder liaison.

The Committee welcomed the informative presentation and had an in-depth discussion on the content of the report and the options presented to them. In response, Members raised a number of comments and questions that were answered accordingly.

In conclusion, the Committee welcomed 'Option 2 - A Technical Response Unit (TRU) at both Ashton-under-Lyne Fire Station and Leigh Fire Station with a Firefighting Capability' as the preferred option and directed Officers to progress with the project.

In addition, the Director of Emergency Response advised that the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England' was published on 11th July 2012 and a report providing further detail on this document would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the presentation and report including the comments raised, be noted.
2. 'Option 2 - A Technical Response Unit (TRU) at both Ashton-under-Lyne Fire Station and Leigh Fire Station with a Firefighting Capability' be accepted as the preferred option.
3. A report on the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England' be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.
8. **STATUS UPDATE ON THE RECENT CHANGES TO BRIGADE CONTROL**

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which advised on the outturn and next steps in the implementation

of the Control Review. The new structure and working patterns went live on 1st June 2012.

It was reported that the transition to the new duty system within Control had gone smoothly and all staff had taken a pragmatic and professional stance towards the changes. However, there were still many further changes to be considered as the move towards the implementation of the North West Fire Control (NWFC) becomes closer.

Members were advised that annualised hours have been utilised within GMFRS since 2006 (for Station based personnel) and policies and processes had been adapted around this. GMFRS was the first organisation to adopt the concept of annualised hours for a Fire Control and as such its progress would be monitored to identify specific benefits or issues. This information would assist in the development of proposed duty systems for NWFC.

In conclusion, the changes to Control would provide a more effective and efficient duty system. The reductions in officer cover would bring GMFRA in line with our regional partners and would start to prepare our organisation for a future transition to NWFC solution.

A tour of GMFRS Control Centre had been arranged to take place at the rise of this Committee which all Members' were invited to attend.

Recommended: That the content of the report and comments raised, be noted.

CHAIRMAN