

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

HELD ON 19th JULY 2012

Present:

Councillor Bernard Judge (Vice-Chairman - In the Chair), Councillors David Acton, Mohammed Ayub, John Bell, Basil Curley, Jim Dawson, Jim Ellis, James Hennigan, David Higgins, Tommy Judge, Amna Mir and Sandra Walmsley

Also in Attendance: Peter O'Reilly (Director of Prevention and Protection), Gwynne Williams (Deputy Clerk and Authority Solicitor), Geoff Harris (Area Manager - Protection Services), Dave Keelan (Area Manager - Prevention) and Donna Parker (Democratic Services Manager)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Walter Brett, Hilary Fairclough and Barrie Holland (Chairman).

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st May 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Under 'Minute 49 – Prohibition and Prosecution Activity Report' Councillor Basil Curley confirmed that the Manchester Fire Authority Members had raised the matter of 'Business Compliance Assessors' with their Chief Executive at Manchester City Council who had given a commitment to look into this matter further.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

4. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

The Chairman reported there were the following two items of urgent business:-

1. Community Safety Advisor Apprenticeships

The Director of Prevention and Protection reported that GMFRS had been working with Salford City College and the National Apprenticeship Scheme to introduce 10 young people on an apprenticeship scheme as 'Community Safety Advisor' from 1st October 2012. To support the scheme, Salford City College were running a 'pre-employment' course for the young people to attend in September to assist retention rates on the Scheme.

2. Local Government Association (LGA) – Sprinklers’ Campaign

Councillor John Bell reported that the Local Government Association (LGA) and Chief Fire Officer’s Association (CFOA) had collaborated to develop a toolkit for use by anyone including Elected Members and Fire Service Officers, when engaging with Members of Parliament, the construction design sector and others to promote the use of sprinklers. The toolkit set out information that would support the case for sprinklers, suggest avenues to engage and lobby for their more widespread use and provided templates for a consistent approach to engagement. GMFRS were actively promoting the use of sprinklers and other types of water suppression systems with Members of Parliament and with local designers and developers. A copy of the toolkit was circulated, for Members information.

Councillor Jim Dawson, Member Champion on Sprinklers, reported that he had contacted Hazel Blears MP asking her to raise the issue of Sprinklers in the House of Commons. In response Hazel Blears MP had contacted Andrew Stunell MP who had stated that a strong campaign was required to support issue.

In response, Councillor David Acton reported that as Chairman of the Authority he fully supported the comments raised and the work being done by GMFRS and Members to promote the Sprinklers’ Campaign.

Recommended: That the updates and comments raised, be noted.

5. **INTRODUCTION TO THE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

Geoff Harris, Area Manager – Head of Protection, gave a presentation on the work and management of the Prevention and Protection Directorate and the rationale for bringing various parts of the Service into the scope of this Directorate.

The presentation included an explanation of the following:-

- The structure and development of the Directorate;
- The role and areas of responsibility for both Prevention and Protection;
- Current areas of work and the future for Children and Young People Services;
- The impact and consequences of incidents;
- How the structure would integrate essential elements of the Service;
- How both the Prevention and Protection risk models work.

The Chairman explained the role of Members on the Committee and how they could link in the work of the Prevention and Protection Directorate with their own local authorities.

Resolved: That the presentation and comments raised be noted.

6. MEMBER TRAINING AND AWARENESS

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which advised of training that was available to Members of the Committee to assist them in understanding the role and wide range of functions which fall within the Prevention and Protection function.

It was reported that training and awareness could be provided either as part of the Committee meeting structure, at the rise of a Committee meeting or through extraordinary meetings and training sessions. In addition, at various times Officers would consult the Committee to determine whether further training or awareness beyond information provided as part of the meeting would be beneficial.

Members were advised that a tour of the GMFRS Control Centre would take place at the rise of the meeting followed by a tour of the Prevention and Protection Directorate which all Members were encouraged to attend.

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

7. LEGAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided an overview of the levels of legal activity that the Prevention and Protection Directorate had been involved in during Quarter 1 – 1st April to 30th June 2012. The report also included activities involving the Fire Investigation Team and the Health and Safety Section.

Members were advised that there had been a noticeable reduction in the number of Prohibition Notices served in recent months. This was due to a more supportive stance being taken in relation to reducing risk to an acceptable level, particularly in relation to premises used for religious, charitable and community purposes.

Members welcomed the informative report and asked a series of questions that were answered accordingly.

Recommended: That the 'Legal Activity Report: Quarter 1 - 1st April to 30th June 2012' including comments raised, be noted.

8. VOLUNTEERING REVIEW UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which presented the outcomes from the 'Review of the Volunteering Management' structure which set out a new approach to the delivery of Volunteering and outlined the benefits, together with the associated costs following the recent review.

It was reported that the reviewed structure would provide the following positive outcomes:

- A more efficient, effective and flexible Volunteering team that were integrated to the Community Safety Teams, Emergency Response Teams and our communities;
- Greater resilience for the management and use of the volunteers across the Directorate and organisation;
- Greater flexibility for all areas of the organisation to access Volunteering through our Community Safety Teams.

A reduction in the number of posts within the Prevention & Protection Directorate represented a saving of £47,191.00.

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

9. GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE COMMUNITY FIRE CADET PROGRAMME AND OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY THE DCLG SUPPORTING INCLUSION PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which advised Members of the expansion of the GMFRS Community Fire Cadet programme including the potential national funding opportunities which may enable further expansion.

It was reported that currently, GMFRS Community Fire Cadets were facilitated at Farnworth, Ramsbottom, Eccles, Stretford, Manchester Central, Littleborough and Leigh Fire Stations. GMFRS would have at least one Cadet Unit in each Borough across Greater Manchester by 31st July 2012, with new Cadet schemes being introduced at Hyde, Stockport, Hollins and Wythenshawe.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had recently made £10 Million of funding available through a new charity called the 'Youth United Foundation' for the development of new uniformed youth schemes. This funding was aimed at 15 priority areas in England including Greater Manchester. The intention was to establish an additional 400 schemes that would operate over an initial two year period. Access to this funding would allow GMFRS to explore further development opportunities and the expansion of Community Fire Cadets beyond initial aspirations.

Members asked a series of questions relating to the scheme, such as the age of the cadets, the recruitment and selection process, set-up and running cost of the system including how the scheme was promoted within the local communities. In response, the Director of Prevention and Protection answered all questions raised accordingly.

In conclusion, the Committee supported the scheme and welcomed the opportunity it gave to local young people to further develop themselves through the GMFRS Community Fire Cadet Programme.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The Committee support the current expansion of the GMFRS Community Fire Cadet Programme.
3. The Committee support the exploration of the 'Supporting Inclusion' funding opportunities to further expand the GMFRS Community Fire Cadet offer to the young people of Greater Manchester.

10. GM COMMUTER CYCLE PROJECT

Dave Keelan, Area Manager – Head of Prevention Services, gave an update on GMFRS involvement in the 'Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) – Local Sustainable Transport Fund Key Component Bid: Greater Manchester Commuter Cycle Project'. The project had been set up to increase the number of people cycling to work and to deliver a low carbon economy. The scheme was being supported by Greater Manchester authorities and Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership.

GMFRS were in full support of the project and had arranged 68 free bike health checks sessions at a number of fire stations across Greater Manchester to encourage more people to take up cycling. Discussions had been had with TfGM with regard to using local Fire Station as 'cycle stops', however, this had been disregarded due to the locality of our Fire Stations.

It was reported that GMFRS would continue to support this project moving forward.

Recommended: That the verbal update, be noted.

11. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE - 23 AUGUST 2012

The Chairman advised that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Prevention and Protection Committee would be taking place on Thursday 23rd August 2012 at 10.30am to consider the outcomes of the consultation on the Prevention, Home Safety and Volunteering Strategies.

Members asked if the meeting could be re-scheduled so not to clash with recess.

Resolved: That a revised date for the 'Extraordinary Meeting of the Prevention and Protection Committee' be identified to take place in September 2012 and Members be informed of the date accordingly.

CHAIRMAN