

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

HELD ON 6th SEPTEMBER 2012

Present:

Councillor David Acton (Chairman), Councillor Tommy Judge (Vice-Chairman), Councillors John Bell (Deputy Chairman), Walter Brett, Dylan Butt, Lynda Byrne, Basil Curley, Jim Dawson, Hilary Fairclough, Grace Fletcher-Hackwood, Derek Heffernan, James Hennigan, David Higgins, Barrie Holland, Bernard Judge, Iain Lindley, Wendy Meikle, Amna Mir, Shelia Newman, John O'Brien, Shaun O'Neill, Fred Walker, Lisa Walker, Sandra Walmsley, Steve Williams and George Wilson

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

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jim Ellis, Alan Matthews and Michael Smith.

23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 21st June 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Minute 10 – Authority Membership 2012/13' being amended to include Salford City Council's Membership to the Authority for 2012/13:-

SALFORD	Councillor Jim Dawson	Labour
	Councillor Iain Lindley	Conservative
	Councillor George Wilson	Labour

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

25. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

There were no items of urgent business received.

26. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chairman informed Members that a Member Training and Development Session on 'GMFRS's Business Model would be taking

place at the rise of this meeting. The Session would be hosted by the Deputy County Fire Officer and all Members were encouraged to attend.

2. The Chairman informed Members that a 'Member Training Session titled 'A Day at a Specialist Station' would be taking place on Thursday 13th September commencing at 9.30am till approx 1.00pm at Heywood Fire Station. All Members were encouraged to attend.
3. The Chairman reminded Members to book their Member Personal Development Interview slots the dates available were Wednesday 12th September, Tuesday 18th September and Thursday 27th September. This was part of the Authority's commitment to the North West Charter for Elected Member Development.
4. The Chairman reminded Members that a 'Member Training Day at Leigh Technical Service Centre' would be taking place on Thursday 11th October commencing at 9.30am till approx 1.00pm. All Members were encouraged to attend. A minibus would be available from FSHQ at 8.45am to take Members to Leigh if they so wished.
5. The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided feedback from the Adjournment Debate in response to the Minister on 'Fire Service Funding' which took place on Wednesday 5th September 2012. A link showing the debate would be emailed to all Members' for their information. Councillor James Hennigan reported that John Leech MP had written a letter supporting the campaign. He would forward a copy of this letter to the Chairman, for his information.

In addition, the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive reported that Brandon Lewis MP had replaced Bob Neill MP as Fire Minister and a visit would be arranged for the new Fire Minister to visit GMFRS in the near future. Also, Councillor Kay Hammond had been appointed as the new Chairman of the LGA Fire Services Management Committee in place of Councillor Brian Coleman. Councillor Kay Hammond would be visiting GMFRS on 21st September 2012.

6. The Chairman informed Members of the sad death of Steve Fisher, Retired Borough Commander on Saturday 18th August 2012. Steve passed away aged 61 after a long battle with cancer. Steve retired from GMFRS (Stockport Borough) in 2010.

A minute's silence was observed.

27. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

Councillor Iain Lindley and Lisa Walker asked the Chairman to consider running future Member Training and Development Sessions in the evening and at weekends to allow Members who work to attend. In response, the Chairman, commented that he would consider this request going forward,

however, this may cause difficulties and clash with evening meetings at other local authorities.

28. MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY, 20 JUNE 2012 OF AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 20th June 2012 were submitted (Appendix 1).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 20th June 2012, be approved.

29. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 21ST JUNE AND 26TH JULY 2012 OF POLICY, RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 21st June and 26th July 2012 were submitted (Appendix 2 and 3).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Policy, Resources and Performance Committee held on 21st June and 26th July 2012, be approved.

30. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2012 OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Emergency Response Committee held on 12th July 2012 were submitted (Appendix 4).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Emergency Response Committee held on 12th July 2012, be approved.

31. MINUTES OF MEETING THURSDAY, 19 JULY 2012 OF PREVENTION AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Prevention and Protection Committee held on 19th July 2012 were submitted (Appendix 5).

Resolved: That the proceedings of the Prevention and Protection Committee held on 19th July 2012, be approved.

32. THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 NEW CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS AND ARRANGEMENTS TO DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk which sought adoption of a new Member Code of Conduct and arrangements for dealing with complaints and to appoint an Independent Person as part of the new arrangements.

The general consensus across AGMA authorities was that the Current Code was reasonably well understood and therefore was little purpose in making any major alterations to it. A summary of the principal differences between the

Current Code and the draft New Code was detailed in paragraphs 8 to 20 of the report. The main proposed changes to the Members Code of Conduct, as detailed in Appendix A of the report were as follows:-

- Paragraph 10 would provide that failure to take appropriate action in respect of a disclosable pecuniary interest may result in a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £5,000 and/or disqualification from office for a period of up to 5 years;
- Paragraph 2 provided that the Code only applied when Members acted as a Member or Co-opted Member of the Authority;
- Part 2 (paragraphs 8 and 9) referred to the new disclosable pecuniary interests;
- Part 3 (paragraphs 11 to 13) still referred to personal and prejudicial interests; and
- The provision in the old Code that Members must treat others with respect had been replaced by an obligation that Members must not “abuse” any person.

A further area for reform was the Authority’s arrangements for handling complaints about breaches of the Code of Conduct. The Authority was required to have local arrangements in place to handle complaints about GMFRA Members. Accordingly, it was proposed that the initial receipt, assessment, rejection or investigation should be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person. Only those cases where there was clear evidence of a breach of the Code of Conduct, following investigation, would go in front of a Panel of Members for decision and sanction.

The Chairman requested that paragraph 3.1 of the Preamble to Appendix A the proposed Code of Conduct be amended to read as follows:-

‘Each Member will have the opportunity to attend training on GMFRA’s Code of Conduct/ethical standards’.

In addition, the Localism Act stated that the Authority must appoint at least one ‘Independent Person’ who had not been, or previously been a Member or Officer of GMFRA in the last five years or close friend of such a person. The role of the Independent Person was detailed in paragraph 23 of the report. Interviews for this position took place on 9th August and it was the recommendation of the Panel to appoint Mr. John Stone as Independent Person to the Authority with a respective term of office of 2 years with an option to extend for a further 2 years subject to approval by the Authority.

Resolved: That:

1. The recommended Code of Conduct for Members as detailed at Appendix A of the report, be adopted, subject to the amendment to paragraph 3.1 to the Preamble of the Code to read as follows:-

'Each Member will have the opportunity to attend training on GMFRA's Code of Conduct/ethical standards'.

2. The recommended local arrangements to handle complaints about breach of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Authority as detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, be adopted.
3. Delegated power be given to the Authority's Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person to grant Dispensations on the grounds listed in paragraph 19 of the report.
4. Mr. John Stone be appointed as the Independent Person for the Authority with a respective term of office of two years with an option to extend for a further two years subject to approval by the Authority.
5. The Authority's Monitoring Officer make amendments to Procedural Standing Orders in order to give effect to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Members in relation to the notification and disclosure of interests and withdrawal from an Authority meeting where a Member has either a Disclosable Pecuniary interest or a Prejudicial interest.
6. The Department for Communities and Local Government 'Openness and Transparency on Personal Interests' Guidance for Councillors, as detailed at Appendix C of the report, be noted.

33. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk which set out the allowances recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel, following the decision of the Authority at its Annual Meeting on 21st June 2012 (Minute 9 refers) to refer certain Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) back to the Panel for reconsideration.

The Panel's recommendations were as follows:

- a) The SRA for the Deputy Chairman of the Authority/Leader of the Main Opposition Group be set at £13,104, with the 12% pension uplift included;
- b) The SRA for the freestanding role of the Chairman of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee be set at £3,713 with the 12% pension uplift included. (A reduction from £7,282 with the 12% pension uplift included from the first supplementary review in October 2011);
- c) The SRA for the Vice-Chairman of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee remain the same at £2,185 with the 12% pension uplift included. This included special responsibility for opposition leadership;
- d) The Authority's current Members' Allowance Scheme be amended to reflect there was no longer a Co-Optees Allowance of £297

payable to the original Independent Standards Members and a further £297 for the Independent Standards Chairman;

- e) It was proposed that the Authority pay a Co-optees Allowance of £297 to the position of Independent Person to the Authority (appointed under the Localism Act 2011). The same as the co-optees allowance paid to Independent Members of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee (Minute 34 below refers).

Resolved: That:

1. The Special Responsibility Allowances recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel, as detailed in the report, be approved as follows:
 - (a) The Deputy Chairman of the Authority/Leader of the Main Opposition Group be set at £13,104, with the 12% pension uplift included;
 - (b) The SRA for the freestanding role of the Chairman of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee be set at £3,713 with the 12% pension uplift included.
2. The Special Responsibility Allowance in respect of the Deputy Chairman of the Authority to include special responsibility for opposition leadership, be approved.
3. The implementation of the revised allowances with effect from 21st June 2012, be approved.
4. A Co-optee Allowance of £297 per annum for the Independent Person of the Authority (appointed under the Localism Act 2011), be approved.
5. The Scheme of Members' Allowances, as detailed at Appendix B of the report, be approved.

34. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE AUDIT, SCRUTINY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk which recommended the appointment of two new Independent Members to the Authority's Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee and the Terms of Office of these positions.

The new Independent Members first meeting of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee would be 27th September 2012. An induction meeting had been arranged to take place prior to this date.

Resolved: That Mr. Francis Walsh and Mrs. Lisa Hindle be appointed as Independent Members of the Authority's Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee for a two year period with delegated authority being given to the Treasurer to extend for a further two years subject to consultation with the

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Audit, Scrutiny and Standards Committee and Director of Finance and Technical Services.

35. LGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 26-28TH JUNE 2012 - FEEDBACK

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided feedback to Members from the LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition 2012 which took place from 26th to 28th June 2012 at the ICC, Birmingham.

It was reported that the next Conference was due to take place on 2nd to 4th July 2013 in Manchester.

Resolved: That the content of the report, be noted.

36. ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE 2011/12

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which outlined the performance against sustainability targets and the Authority's key achievements through the sustainability programme over the 2011/12 financial year. The report provided a summary of the key highlights since the last update and the economic and carbon savings achieved through delivering the Authority's strategy. To date savings of £3.09 million had been achieved through utility and fuel cost avoidance, compared to having taken no action.

Councillor George Wilson, Member Champion for Sustainability, welcomed the informative report and thanked Officers for their hard work and commitment to this area of work.

Resolved: That:

1. The progress towards meeting the target of reducing resource use by 25% by the end of 2013/14, be noted.
2. The key sustainability initiatives planned for 2012/13 in order to remain on target for a 25% reduction in resource consumption and a £3.09 million saving in associated costs by 2014, be noted.
3. The non-financial information detailed within the report be used for external publication including websites and press releases.

37. CHIEF OFFICERS' ACTIVITY REPORT (QUARTER 1 - 1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2012)

The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive presented the 'Chief Officer's Activity Report' for Quarter 1 2012/13 – 1st April to 30th June 2012, 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. The report also provided an update on the following subject matters:-

- Operational Incidents;
- Service Delivery;
- Prevention and Protection;
- Events and campaigns;
- Children and Young People;
- Training and Development;
- Resilience and Urban Search and Rescue.

Members had a detailed discussion on the content of the report and the activity which had taken place across the Service in Quarter 1. The County Fire Officer and Chief Executive made particular reference to the explosion in Shaw which took place in June 2012 and how social media had been a key tool in updating the public on the incident.

Councillor John Bell, Deputy Chairman, reported that Tameside MBC Members had attended a Member Training Session at Ashton Fire Station on the 'Role and Responsibilities of GMFRS' on 21st August 2012 which had been facilitated by GMFRS staff. This session had been a great success and welcomed by Tameside MBC Members. In conclusion, Councillor Bell suggested rolling out this initiative across all Greater Manchester local authorities.

Resolved: That the 'Chief Officer's Activity Report' for Quarter 1 2012/13 – 1st April to 30th June 2012 and comments raised, be noted.

38. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT (1ST APRIL TO 30TH JUNE 2012)

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 2012/15 development and delivery goals for Quarter 1 of 2012/13. The current Corporate Plan was adopted at the meeting of the Authority on 19th April 2012 following extensive consultation.

A condensed summary of the overall development goal progress was detailed at Appendix A of the report it was reported that progress was broadly on target with the exceptions noted within the summary. An overview of Quarter 1 performance against the corporate performance indicators was detailed at Appendix B of the report.

The 'Measuring Progress', report detailed at Appendix C of the report, provided a greater level of detail and transparency of performance against the corporate measures broken down by each borough. The 'Measuring Progress' report was intended to complement the richer picture of overall Service activity contained within the quarterly CFO' Activity Reports and to support Members in their meetings with Borough Managers and partners.

A summary of the reasons for sickness absence was detailed in Appendix D of the report. There had been little change to the top 5 sickness causes during 211/12 and in Quarter 1 to date with musculo-skeletal and mental health sickness in line with national trends.

Members had an in-depth discussion on the content of the report and asked a series of questions regarding its content. Specific reference was made to the Call Handling Results for 2012/13 and how this should improve with the introduction of the new NW Control Centre and the performance for appliance turn out from whole time and retained stations.

Resolved: That:

1. The performance against the development and delivery goals for Quarter 1 2012/13 of the Corporate Plan 2012/15, be noted.
2. The 'Measuring Progress' Quarterly report, as detailed in Appendix C of the report, for future use in meetings with Borough Managers and partners, be noted.

CHAIRMAN