

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMITTEE

HELD ON 25th OCTOBER 2012

Present:

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

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

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Iain Lindley and Lisa Walker.

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th July 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

12. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

There were no items of urgent business submitted.

13. 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 were advised that 'Development Goal 9 – Revise the current Rostering for Duty arrangements to reduce the numbers of staff needed to operate the system and create significant efficiencies, had now concluded and would be removed from future reports'.

Members were advised that the next meeting of the Committee on 17th January 2013 would be devoted to 'Development Goal 26 – Research, development and implementation of new or revised firefighting procedures, equipment, and techniques with the aim of improving firefighting capabilities and improve public and firefighter safety'. The meeting would take place at the Training and Development Centre in Manchester which all Members of the Authority would be invited to attend.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The next meeting of the Committee on 17th January 2013 be devoted to Development Goal 26 and held at the Training and Development Centre in Manchester.
3. All Members of the Authority be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee on 17th January 2013.

14. DEVELOPMENT OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIRECTORATE OPERATIONAL TRAINING FACILITIES

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided an update on the Operational Training and Development facilities within GMFRS following on from an approved capital bid of £1.4 million capital which the Authority made in January 2011.

Sean Booth, Area Manager for Operational Policy and Procedure and Training and Development, was in attendance and gave a presentation on the progress made to date in the introduction of improved Operational Training and Development facilities across GMFRS. The presentation included footage of recently built facilities which were now in use and simulations of the next phase of facilities due to be delivered during this financial year. It was reported that since implementation a saving of approximately £250,000 had been made by using the new In-House Training facilities rather than sending firefighters and incident commanders to external training providers such as the Fire College.

Members asked a series of questions on the content of the presentation regarding future income generation possibilities and the training site at Manchester Airport that was answered accordingly.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Sean Booth, Area Manager for the informative presentation.

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

15. HIGH RISE FIRE-FIGHTING

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided information on the work undertaken to ensure that equipment, training, procedures and response to incidents involving High Rise buildings, was proportionate and appropriate to maintain the safety of the public and operational crews within Greater Manchester.

It was reported that the recommendations from the investigation into a High Rise fire that claimed the lives of two Firefighters in 2010 and the findings of health and safety management inspections carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2009/10, have been progressed through the High Rise Task and Finish Group. Members were advised of the work which had been undertaken by the Group to reduce the risk of High Rise incidents including research of new firefighting techniques and training facilities, the combination of both would assist in ensuring that Operational Crews remained effective, safe and in a state of operational readiness.

Members had a detailed discussion on the number of high rise buildings in the Greater Manchester area. The Director of Emergency Response commented that intelligence had been gathered on all high rise properties within the area and input onto the Operational Intelligence System that was accessed by the Mobile Data Terminal on appliances to assist crews when attending incidents.

The Chairman requested that a session on 'Mobile Data Terminals' take place at the rise of a future meeting of the Committee.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The continuing activities to support public and Firefighting safety, be noted.
3. A session on 'Mobile Data Terminals' be arranged to take place at the rise of a future meeting of the Committee.

16. OPERATION COUNTY GUARD

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided an update on the Operation County Guard Business Continuity Plan.

It was reported that in response to legal and governmental expectations, the Service had been reviewing and revising its Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements. The review resulted in revised planning assumptions for business continuity during industrial action and subsequent changes to the Operation County Guard Business Continuity Plan.

The plan provided a framework, products and an implementation plan, which was designed to satisfy the Fire and Rescue Authority's statutory duty to provide services during business disruption that were reasonably practicable in the circumstances that prevail at the time to prevent loss of life and injury.

In addition, the report highlighted the proposed transfer of the plan from the County Guard Task and Finish Group to the generic Business Continuity Management (BCM) Group following the completed production of the framework, products and implementation plan.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report and comments raised, be noted.
2. The statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Authority for ensuring business continuity, be noted.
3. The transfer of the County Guard Plan to the Business Continuity Management Group, be noted.

CHAIRMAN