

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMITTEE

HELD ON 17th JANUARY 2013

Present:

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

In addition: Councillors Walter Brett, Dylan Butt, James Dawson, David Higgins, Bernard Judge and Amna Mir

Also in Attendance: Steve McGuirk (County Fire Officer & Chief Executive), Paul Argyle (Director of Emergency Response), Gwynne Williams (Deputy Clerk and Authority Solicitor), Shelley Wright (Director of Corporate Communications), Sean Booth (Area Manager - Head of Operational Training), Andy Brookes (Area Manager - Head of Resource Management), Geoff Harris (Area Manager - Protection Services), Tony Hunter (Area Manager - Head of Operational Policy and Performance) and Donna Parker (Democratic Services Manager)

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th October 2012 were approved and signed as a correct record.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

20. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

The Chairman advised that this meeting had been 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 improving public and firefighting safety' and all Members of the Authority had been invited to attend (Minute 23 refers).

The Chairman also took the opportunity to remind Members that a visit to the North West Fire Control at Lingley Mere in Warrington would be taking place on Saturday 26th January 2013 commencing at 10.00am to showcase the facilities at the site and provide a status update on how the project was

moving forward. The visit would be hosted by Damian Parkinson, Director of ICT and all Members were encouraged to attend.

21. 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.

In relation to Development Goal 7 'Review the current arrangements for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), and their relationship with international search and rescue capabilities, recommend improvements and implement as required', it was reported that GMFRS USAR Team had teamed up with a demolition company to deconstruct a drill tower at Philip's Park Community Fire Station. This was part of a training operation named 'Exercise Pisa' following a suggestion from a GMFRS USAR team member. The exercise also involved USAR members from West Yorkshire, Merseyside and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services.

Members had a discussion about Manchester Airport's Fire and Rescue Service and were advised that this was a stand-alone Service separate from GMFRS and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. It was reported that Manchester Airport's Fire and Rescue Service had their own specific training facilities on site. The Chairman suggested arranging a visit for Members to view the current facilities at the Airport in the near future.

Members were advised that Development Goal 26 would be covered at Item 7 – 'Future Firefighting Update and Demonstration' (Minute 23 refers).

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

22. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which presented the Service's health and safety performance over the 2011/12 period and identified opportunities to ensure continuous improvement including the proposed future changes to reporting health and safety performance. A copy of the Health and Safety Performance Report 2011/12 was attached at Appendix A of the report, for reference. Members were advised that this report had already been presented to the Prevention and Protection Committee on 8th November 2012 (Minute 26 refers).

It was reported that this would be the last time health and safety performance would be presented as a separate report to the Prevention and Protection Committee. Future health and safety performance would be reported through the 'Prevention and Protection Directorate Activity Report' and through the quarterly Performance Report which were presented to meetings of the Authority.

Members welcomed the report and had an in-depth discussion on its content raising a series of questions and comments that were answered accordingly by Officers. In conclusion, Members requested that future reports include information relating to the number of days absence due to accidents and that success in reducing the number of accidents and injuries was analysed to identify best practice.

Recommended: That:

1. The 'Health and Safety Performance Report 2011/12' and comments raised, be noted.
2. Future reports include information relating to the number of days absence due to accidents and that success in reducing the number of accidents and injuries be analysed to identify best practice.
3. The implementation of the recommendations contained within the Health and Safety Performance Report 2011/12, be supported.

23. DV26 - FUTURE FIREFIGHTING UPDATE AND DEMONSTRATION

Consideration was given to a report of the County Fire Officer and Chief Executive which provided progress to date on Development Goal 26 – 'Research and where appropriate, develop and implement new or revised firefighting procedures, equipment and techniques with the aim of improving firefighting capabilities and public and firefighting safety' more commonly known as 'Future Firefighting'. The report detailed the planned 'Future Firefighting' techniques, associated equipment and procedures including the benefits that would be delivered and the costs associated with the project.

Members were advised that Officers had been researching the various Fire Service and Fire Industry arenas, and had now developed a Future Firefighting approach and strategy which combined the utilisation of different equipment, procedures and techniques that would improve Firefighter and public safety and reduce fire damage and environmental impacts. The introduction of these Future Firefighting techniques would not only produce professional efficiencies and effectiveness which should reduce the fire damage impact to the community and the environment, but should enable firefighters to deal with incidents more quickly and potentially with a lower level of resource response.

Members received a demonstration of the combined use of Thermal Imaging Scanners, Cold Cutting Ultra High Pressure branches (CC/UPH) and Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) fans on the training ground at the Training Centre. The demonstration showed how the Thermal Imaging Scanners were used and how effective the Cold Cutting Ultra High Pressure branches were in a number of different scenarios.

Members had an in-depth discussion on the content of the report and the demonstration which they had received and raised a series of questions and comments that were answered accordingly by Officers.

In conclusion, the Committee welcomed the report and thanked Officers for the demonstration provided, and endorsed the need for further research to understand the implications on casualties/firefighters of deploying the new tactics.

Recommended: That:

1. The content of the report, demonstration and comments raised, be noted.
2. The Committee support the on-going delivery of Development Goal 26 as detailed in the report including the budgetary requirement to put this Future Fighting Project in place.
3. The Committee endorsed the need for further research to understand the implications on casualties/firefighters of deploying the new tactics.

CHAIRMAN