

Greater Manchester Police, Fire & Crime Panel

Date: 20th November 2023

Subject: GMFRS Manchester Arena Inquiry Update

Report of: ACFO Barry Moore

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update and assurance to the Panel on the progress against the Manchester Arena Inquiry recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of the report and support the progress of the work undertaken to date.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

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Equalities Impact, Carbon, and Sustainability Assessment:

Considered as part of the training program. Not captured in this paper.

Risk Management

See paragraph 7-10

Legal Considerations

See paragraph 6

Financial Consequences - Capital

N/A

Financial Consequences - Revenue

N/A

Number of attachments included in the report:

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Manchester Arena Inquiry Phase 2 Report.

GMFRS Corporate Statement to the Inquiry February 2023.

GMFRS Corporate Statement to the Inquiry May 2023.

TRACKING/PROCESS		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		Yes/No
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		Yes/No
TfGMC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	N/A	

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the publication of the Manchester Arena Inquiry (MAI) Volume 2 Report, and with particular reference to the Monitored Recommendations, Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service (GMFRS) appointed a Project Team to undertake work related to its recommendations in terms of policy revision, training and exercising. The role of the team primarily relates to the monitored recommendations but also extends to the wider observations related to multi-agency liaison and Service improvement.
2. This report provides an update of the ongoing work undertaken by the Project Team and wider GMFRS leadership team.

Inquiry Update

3. The Inquiry has now concluded, and the Chairman has issued notice, pursuant to section 14 of the Inquiries Act 2005, that he has fulfilled the Inquiry's terms of reference.
4. The recommendations made by the Inquiry will continue to be monitored by Tom Parr, the Manchester Arena Inquiry Assurance Program Lead for the Homeland Security Group within the Home Office.
5. An initial meeting has been scheduled between a member of Mr Parr's team, CFO Dave Russell, ACFO Barry Moore and GM Jim Willmott in November 2023.

Monitored Recommendations Update

6. GMFRS are satisfied it has met the requirements of four of the five Monitored Recommendations and a high-level summary of actions can be found in Appendix A.

GMFRS continues to make good progress against its fifth Monitored Recommendation: "R39 - GMFRS should reflect on its approach to record-making during and immediately following a Major Incident, with a view to improving current practice". Primarily this involves the trial of audio and visual recording systems for use at incidents which concluded at the end of October.

7. At the previous Deputy Mayor Executive meeting a report was requested to provide an update on the progress made by North West Fire Control on their monitored recommendations and this is attached in Appendix B.

ADDITIONAL COMMITMENTS AND AREAS OF ASSURANCE

8. Further to the internal work linked directly to the GMFRS owned recommendations, the service is committed and embedded in a number of additional areas.

These being:

a) Greater Manchester Mayoral Oversight Group

GMFRS attends the Mayoral Oversight Group, Chaired by Baroness Beverly Hughes, which scrutinises progress against all recommendations that apply to organisations within GMCA.

b) Local Resilience Forum (LRF)

GMFRS attends the LRF commissioned Multi-Agency Threat and Preparedness Group, a task and finish sub-group reporting to the LRF's Resilience Oversight Group (ROG). The group jointly reviews the related recommendations as well as undertaking multi-agency review of other high risk, low frequency incidents.

c) National Fire Chiefs Council Manchester Arena Inquiry Oversight Group (NFCC MAIOG)

GMFRS is a member of the NFCC MAIOG which has been established to oversee the progress of recommendations on behalf of the NFCC, which is Chaired by the CFO of Tyne & Wear FRS. GMFRS is represented by CFO Dave Russel and ACFO Barry Moore. There has not been a MAIOG meeting since the last DME.

i. NFCC MAI Tracker

The MAI recommendations have been uploaded to a portal reporting tool similar to that used nationally for the Grenfell Tower Fire Recommendations which is now live and is being populated by all UK Fire and Rescue Services.

Of the 148 recommendations within the MAI Phase 2 report, 48 have been deemed applicable to Fire Service's nationally which include the Monitored Recommendations for GMFRS. GMFRS has recorded 22 of the 48 as complete; a further 21 of the recommendations are in progress and the remaining 5 not yet started, this is due to the last 5 recommendations being contingent on national work streams.

The Project Team are planning a peer review as part of the process to report on the 48 recommendations and early discussions have taken place with Tyne & Wear FRS. The peer review is expected to be conducted next year.

d) NWFC

GMFRS continues to work closely with colleagues at NWFC, undertaking a joint review of process and procedure.

Throughout August and September GMFRS undertook 12 training sessions with NWFC control room operators, team leaders and operations managers on the role of the Operational Support Officer, the new MTA procedures and associated Action Plans, high risk/low frequency incident types and operational discretion.

A report on NWFC progress against the monitored recommendations is in Appendix B.

e) Blue Light Collaboration

GMFRS continues to liaise closely with partners in NWFC, GMP, BTP, NWS. The MAI project team continue the work on high risk, low frequency incident types and currently focused on aviation risk and bomb threat/found ordinance alongside Cat 1 partners, the LRF, EOD and Manchester Airport.

i. Multi-Agency Exercises

The Inquiry team has worked with the MTA training and exercising team, delivering update sessions on the lessons learned, changes to the standard operating procedure and actions plans so that they can be incorporated into the training exercising calendar over the coming year. Further exercises are planned in November at the Trafford Centre, utilising a vacant hotel building. These exercises will continue to test the multi-agency response.

f) Shared Learning

GMFRS has developed a presentation based on its own learning and the Monitored Recommendations from the Inquiry entitled, 2 hours, 8 minutes – Our Story, Our Learning.

The presentation has been developed over a number of months and was presented at the NFCC Autumn Conference on the 10th of October 2023. Feedback was excellent from the attendees and the Service was applauded for the honest and transparent approach to the learning and organizational improvement. We have already received requests to share the learning at other events in the country.

A program will be established over the coming months to share the presentation with staff internally and also partners in the blue light and LRF.

Appendix A – Achieved MAI Monitored Recommendations

A high-level summary of work against the three GMFRS recommendations and linked North West Fire Control (NWFC) recommendation that have been met are as follows

R36 - Ensure its commanders are adequately trained in the use of operational discretion.

- Policy and governance around Operational Discretion reviewed and amended to include declaration.
- Improved training developed and delivered to Officers and currently being rolled out to all other command levels.
- Bespoke learning package on Operational Discretion in development to form part of annual training.
- Assurance process with quarterly reporting and governance now in place.

R37 - GMFRS should review the policy by which the Incident Commander takes up the role, in light of the shortcomings I have identified in policy in operation on 22 May 2017.

- Incident Command policy and procedure reviewed and strengthened to make clear the circumstances in which command of an incident is taken over at any incident and how this is achieved.
- Training provided to commanders at all levels and exercises completed.
- Assurance process is ongoing at incidents and for all future exercises, the element has been tested in a series of five recent MTA exercises at Bolton College.

R38 - GMFRS should review its guidance and policies on how it receives and passes on information during a Major Incident. It is important that, for any update given, it is established when the last time the person receiving the update was provided with information, to ensure that they are completely up to date.

- Policy and procedure reviewed and amended to ensure that information received is logged and passed on during an incident.
- Procedures for obtaining updates amended to ensure that the person receiving the update has an up to date and holistic briefing.
- Training and exercising to assure this process is taking place has been completed and will form part of the objectives for future exercises including the forthcoming MTA exercise at the Trafford Centre.

R32 (shared with NWFC). - GMFRS and NWFC should conduct a joint review of the circumstances in which it is appropriate for GMFRS personnel to check the NWFC incident log. Policies should be written by both organisations to reflect the outcome of this review. Training should be delivered to embed it into practice.

- A full review of the circumstances in which GMFRS will access incident logs was completed in November 2022 and reviewed in May 2023. The joint review informed the development of a new GMFRS document relating to accessing incident logs which has been adopted with training provided for staff.
- NWFC Operational Support Officer role created to support access to the log and to provide support and oversight during a major incident.
- Familiarisation training at NWFC in progress for GMFRS officers.
- Familiarisation training scheduled for NWFC colleagues delivered by NWFC colleagues.
- This element will be tested on joint exercises including the forthcoming MTA exercise at the Trafford centre.

Appendix B – Northwest Fire Control update on progress against the MAI Monitored Recommendations.

1. In response to a review of its actions on the night of 22nd May 2017, and supported by evidence heard during the Manchester Arena Inquiry, North West Fire Control (NWFC) took steps to improve its organisational performance ahead of the publication of Volume 2 of the Inquiry's Report. Since its publication, further work has been undertaken to ensure that changes have aligned to the Monitored Recommendations pertaining to NWFC.
2. NWFC is confident that it has fully implemented six (28, 29, 30, 32, 33 & 34) out of its eight Monitored Recommendations and will have the remaining two (31 & 35) completed before the end of this financial year. Progress against each of the monitored recommendations is laid out in the paragraphs below.
3. **Recommendation R28: North West Fire Control should take steps to ensure that it is involved in multi-agency exercises, particularly those that test mobilisation and the response to a Major Incident in line with the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.**

Through its newly established Organisational Improvement Team (OIT), NWFC has set up an annual training and exercising schedule which is populated from internal training needs analysis, FRS annual exercise schedules (including multi-agency exercises) and multi-agency exercises taken from the GMRF Commissioning Group for Exercising and Training at which NWFC now has a permanent representative from OIT. Completion of the annual exercise schedule is directly linked to the annual business and financial planning cycles and the annual appraisal process. Training programmes have been aligned to the training specifications contained within the National Operational Guidance (NOG) for control rooms and this includes a new Multi-Agency NOG.

Several multi-agency exercises have taken place; Exercises Rook and Inception have specifically tested against MAI learning and the Monitored Recommendations. Each has been run 4 times to capture every team at NWFC and has included FRS operational personnel as participants and other agencies as observers.

A Multi-Agency Tactical Communications Control Group has been established and NWFC is represented both at this group as well as the Strategic Group. NWFC also attends the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum (GMRF).

This Monitored Recommendation is deemed to have been implemented.

4. Recommendation R29: North West Fire Control should ensure that it regularly tests how it operates, by ensuring that its staff participate in regular exercises and practical tests. These should include multi-agency exercises.

GMFRS and NWFC have worked together to produce the 'GMFRS Exercise Plan for 2023/24 - 2024/25'. This document ensures that NWFC is involved in the testing and exercising of Standard Operating Procedures, including Response Plans and Action Plans, with a minimum of 2 weeks planning notice.

NWFC have trained staff on the 'lessons learned' from the Manchester Arena incident and subsequent Inquiry in December 2022 and January 2023, this included defining responsibilities; and active support and contribution by NWFC to incident management during a multi-agency major event. The effectiveness of these sessions has been tested through exercises to evaluate the degree to which learning has been understood and embedded. Audits of the effectiveness of the NWFC major incident action plan have also been undertaken and all control room personnel attended the GMFRS Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) Familiarisation Training.

This Monitored Recommendation is deemed to have been implemented.

5. Recommendation R30: All North West Fire Control staff should be trained on the best practices for responding to a Major Incident, as identified through its participation in exercises. North West Fire Control should ensure that learning is kept under review.

JESIP and Action Counter Terrorism (ACT) Awareness Training has been delivered to all staff, including the updated JESIP Doctrine, both form part of the annual training programme. Staff training in 2023 is focused on learning from the MAI including the monitored recommendations. All training, testing, exercising, auditing and assurance is managed through a cyclical process, currently being introduced with full implementation expected by April 2024.

A formalised and continuous process of training and assessment has also been introduced for all staff. 'Safe to Operate' ensures Control Room Operators know how to engage their training in practice in a live environment through performance assessment based on their level of experience. This will be rolled out to include all staff by April 2025.

Operations Managers whose role includes ensuring that multi-agency and major incident training, exercising and assurance are included in the annual training and exercising schedule; have attended a course for Crisis and Business Continuity Exercising which included multi-agency guidance in JESIP principles and the key principles of joint working. A suite of desk top exercises has been produced and

delivered by the JESIP and Exercise Lead entitled 'Exercise Inception' to validate the learning from training.

The debriefing process has been reviewed to measure performance against the expected standards set out in guidance and also includes an enhanced process for sharing learning across the workforce and other agencies.

This Monitored Recommendation is deemed to have been implemented.

6. 31: North West Fire Control should review the way it captures and records key information on its incident logs in order to ensure that the information is stored in one place and is readily accessible at all times by those who need it.

Detailed development work has been undertaken on the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, requiring regional investment of circa £51k, enabling Control Room Operators to mobilise resources to different locations associated with a single incident, for example, rendezvous and forward command points. The solution allows for the use of single radio talk group across locations and a central incident log for the recording of information. The software update is complete and has been deployed onto the 'test' mobilising system.

Actions Outstanding:

- Agreement of the joint ways of working between NWFC and the regional FRSs.
- Training to be delivered to all NWFC Control personnel.
- Deployment of the solution onto the live system for go live.

7. Recommendation R32: Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and North West Fire Control should conduct a joint review of the circumstances in which it is appropriate for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue personnel to check the North West Fire Control incident log. Policies should be written by both organisations to reflect the outcome of this review. Training should be delivered to embed it into practice.

A joint review was undertaken between NWFC and GMFRS and reported back to the NWFC Mobilising and Communications Group in February 2023. The review examined key areas including which roles needed access to the incident logs and when; and the information needed from INetViewer (the system used to access incident logs). Following the review, a joint NWFC/FRS operating procedure was drawn up and agreed by the NWFC Mobilising and Communications Group. The operating procedure addressed the areas highlighted in the review. Training was delivered to all iNetViewer users, and a user guidance document issued to all existing and new users.

NWFC has worked with GMFRS to implement and test the role of the Operational Support Officer (OSO) through a series of exercises. The OSO role attends NWFC to act as a conduit to the incident ground (or command locations) and to support the gathering and sharing of information (including through iNetViewer) during a major incident.

This Monitored Recommendation is deemed to have been implemented.

- 8. Recommendation R33: North West Fire Control should review its guidance and policies on how it receives and passes on information during a major incident. It is important that, for any update give, it is established when the last time the person receiving the update was provided with information, to ensure that they are completely up to date.**

NWFC conducted a review of its guidance and protocols for compiling FRS Action Plans, in particular actions that required information to be gathered and/or shared. The review, supported by operational assurance audits and debriefs highlighted a substantial increase in the amount of information sharing actions, some of which did not impact the immediate resolution of the incident and could have been carried out after incident closure, these are under review by the individual FRSs.

Refresher training delivered in January 2023 focused on sharing situational awareness and the introduction of a way of working to check with officers, each time they contact control, when the last update was that they received. CROs then navigate to the relevant point of the incident log and update the officer with all information since that point; this is being monitored through the debriefing process and assurance audits. NWFC has also produced guidance on 'Gathering Accurate Information and Intelligence and Sharing' using the JESIP 'Talk not Tell' procedure which has been included in training.

This Monitored Recommendation is deemed to have been implemented.

- 9. Recommendation R34: North West Fire Control should review how it allocates the best trained and most suitable Control Room Operators to roles during a Major Incident. It should consider whether it is beneficial to allocate a Control Room Operator to monitor communications on a multi-agency control room talk group and another Control Room Operator as the specific point of contact for the fire and rescue service. Both roles could be supervised by a Team Leader.**

NWFC has reviewed its process for allocating appropriate CROs to roles based on their level of experience. As a result, a 'changing role' procedure was installed on the NWFC radio and telephony communications equipment (LifeX). This enables access only to activities commensurate to the experience level of the CRO.

The Emergency Services Interoperability Talk Group (ESICTRL) is permanently monitored through a loudspeaker situated on every mobilising pod and guidance was updated in 2021 to specify the allocation of a single CRO to monitor the interoperability talk group on declaration of a major incident, this is embedded as standard practice.

Allocating an operator as the specific point of contact has been considered and is being addressed through the introduction of an operational command role aligned to the Fire Control Command NOG. The introduction of this role is still in the trial phase and is under review prior to full introduction. NWFC is progressing the repurposing of one Team Leader role from each team as an Operations Manager in overall command of the team to bolster control command support at a strategic/tactical level, allowing for greater capacity to support the operational command role.

This Monitored Recommendation is deemed to have been implemented.

10. Recommendation 35: North West Fire Control should reflect on its approach to record-making during and immediately following a Major Incident, with a view to improving the current practice.

There is a plan to introduce a trial of Dictaphones for use during major incidents and while progress has been made the commencement of the trial has been delayed due to other work priorities. To date a draft policy has been written and consulted upon and the Dictaphones have been purchased. They have been used during a recent exercise to get a feel about how could be used and to better understand the impact of transcribing the information recorded on them. It is anticipated that the trial of Dictaphones will commence before the end of this calendar year.

Actions Outstanding:

- Finalise amendments to the draft policy based on feedback from consultations.
- Determine secure storage of data and agree data management arrangements.
- Train NWFC personnel on the use of Dictaphones and their purpose for recording decisions and the rationale behind them.
- Implement the trial.