

North West Fire & Rescue Forum AGM

Minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2017

At
NW Fire Control, Lingley Mere, Warrington

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| Present: | Authority: |
| Cllr D Hanratty | Merseyside (Chair) |
| Cllr L Byrom | Merseyside |
| Cllr B Rudd | Cheshire |
| Cllr S Nelson | Cheshire |
| Cllr B Doughty | Cumbria |
| Cllr D Acton | Greater Manchester |
| Cllr F De Molfetta | Lancashire |
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| Officers/Observers: | Authority: |
| Mr P Hancock | Cheshire |
| | Cumbria |
| Mr C Kenny | Lancashire |
| Mr P Argyle | Greater Manchester |
| Mr D Stephens | Merseyside |
| Mrs K Kellaway | Merseyside (Note taker) |
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| Apologies: | Authority: |
| Cllr G Merry | Cheshire |
| Cllr G Strong | Cumbria |
| Cllr T Judge | Greater Manchester |
| Cllr J Bell | Greater Manchester |
| Mr P O'Reilly | Greater Manchester |
| Cllr L Rennie | Merseyside |
| Cllr L Maloney | Merseyside |
| Mrs J Henshaw | Merseyside |
| Cllr D O'Toole | Lancashire |
| Cllr M Parkinson | Lancashire |
| Mr K Mattinson | Lancashire |

| Agenda Item | Minute |
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| 1. | <p>Chairman's Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and opened proceedings.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received as shown in the table above.</p> |
| 5. | <p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No declarations of interest were made in relation to items of business on the Agenda.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Items Requiring Urgent Attention</p> <p>There were no matters requiring urgent attention.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of 19th October 2016 were agreed as a true record.</p> |
| 8. | <p><u>Actions from the Last Meeting</u></p> <p>Action 1 – Lobbying</p> <p>The Chair advised that a letter had been sent to the Fire Minister and Dan Greaves requesting a meeting, but as yet a response had not been received.</p> <p><u>This action is ongoing and will remain on the Action Log.</u></p> <p>Action 2 – NWAS</p> <p>The Chair advised that a letter had been sent to NWAS as agreed at the last meeting, however a response was yet to be received.</p> <p><u>The Chair confirmed that he would continue dialogue with NWAS and the action would remain on the Action Log.</u></p> <p>Action 3 – Policing and Crime Bill</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Bill is now in the final stages, with no further amendments anticipated.</p> <p><u>This action is ongoing and will remain on the action log.</u></p> <p>Action 5 – Devolution Deals</p> <p>The Chair advised that for Merseyside, there had been no further developments with regards to devolution.</p> |

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| | <p>Discussion took place around devolution in Greater Manchester. The Forum were advised that Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority will be abolished on 8th May 2017, at which point the newly elected Metro Mayor will take over responsibility for Fire. A 15 person Committee will be established, consisting of an elected Member appointed from each of the 10 Districts, with the other 5 Members, including the Chair of the Committee, being appointed by the Mayor. It was confirmed that all Members of the Committee will be elected Members.</p> <p>The Mayor will have responsibility for setting the Budget, recruitment of the Chief Fire Officer; and agreeing the IRMP, which are functions that cannot be delegated. However, it is anticipated that the Mayor will delegate everyday functions to the Committee.</p> <p>The Forum were advised that Warrington have decided they wish to remain part of the Cheshire region, therefore devolution within Cheshire can now go ahead. However, it was noted that the devolution deal for Cheshire does not include governance for Police or Fire.</p> <p>It was further noted that the driver from Government is for PCC's to take over Fire and Rescue Authorities, however there will be different drivers for different areas. The Forum were advised that the PCC for Cheshire has no interest at present in taking over the governance of the Fire and Rescue Authority, however the PCC has been co-opted onto the Authority as a non-voting Member.</p> <p>Questions were raised around proportionality of any Committees established and discussion took place regarding potential proportionality issues, gender balance and the potential for challenge.</p> <p>DS asked if a Constitution had been drafted for the Greater Manchester Committee. He was informed that one had not been drafted as yet and it was anticipated that this would be drawn up following the election of the Mayor.</p> <p>Further discussion took place around transitional arrangements following the abolition of the Fire and Rescue Authority, the transition of staff to the Combined Authority; and which other authorities have, or will be transferred to the Combined Authority.</p> <p><u>The Chair confirmed that this action is ongoing and will therefore remain on the Action Log.</u></p> |
| 9. | <p>Chairman's Update</p> <p>The Chair advised that there were no issues to update the Forum on.</p> |
| 10. | <p>Priorities Going Forward</p> <p>The Chair stated that it was agreed that this would be discussed at alternate meetings, therefore this item will be deferred until the next meeting.</p> |

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North West FRS Updates

Cheshire:

CFO Paul Hancock provided the Forum with an update on behalf of Cheshire, as follows:

- IRMP 14 (17/18) consultation concluded on 3rd January – first year of a four year plan – forecasting £4m savings over the next four years, Authority expected to approve the plan and budget/ MTFP on 14th February.
- 16/17 last year of current four year IRMP – 3 of the 4 new stations are now operational: Penketh and Powey Lane (Mollington) went live on 11th January. Lymm station scheduled to go live in April, at which point Stockton Heath and Knutsford stations will move from day crewed to a retained duty system. Safety Centre (Lymm) to be completed in July ready to open in September.
- Redeployments and new management structure (including revised flexi duty system) for the new stations/ fire cover model implemented.
- RDS recruitment ongoing for second pumps at Crewe and Ellesmere Port.
- Two new ALP's now on the run at Chester and Stockton Heath (£1.2m Capital investment).
- WM development programme – first cohort completed.
- Wholetime trainees commenced their training on 9th January.
- Apprentices successfully completed their Prince's Trust Team programme. Now spending time with HQ functional departments as part of their apprenticeship programme – 11 on scheme (4 females – 33%).
- PID for Training Centre Project at Sadler Road (£7m capital investment) completed and approved.
- Police collaboration on track and making progress – ICT team TUPE transferred on 1st November; number of other teams currently co-located with TUPE transfer dates scheduled for later in the year. PO team scheduled to move to Clemonds Hey in August. Programme on track for completion by April 2018.
- Members have invited the PCC to Authority meetings and Planning Days as a precursor to changing the Authority's constitution to allow him to be a member (non-voting rights) of the Authority.

Cumbria:

CFO Paul Hancock provided the Forum with the following update on behalf of Cumbria:

- CC Elections in May
- Katherine Fairclough appointed as new Chief Executive with effect from 1st March (currently Deputy Chief Executive at Warrington BC).
- Significant financial challenges for the CC - £52m for 17/18. FRS savings are £600k – these will be realised by management restructure (implemented 1st November 2016), changes to crewing at Penrith, plus savings from pensions contributions (Modified scheme and the 92, 06 and 15 schemes). CC budget to be presented to Full Council in February.

- Cabinet recently approved IRMP 14 (17/18) – 12 hour shifts, EMR and Safe and Well Assessments.
- Now developing plans for 18/19 and beyond for the new administration. Mergers and station closures not currently options.
- Furness Peninsula Blue Light Hub progressing: CFRS, NWAS, Police and ASC to be located in the same building (partly funded by transformation monies from DCLG).
- PCC recently written to the Leader of the Council suggesting a meeting to discuss collaboration opportunities and governance of the FRS.
- EMR finally progressing – hopefully we will have a number of pilots starting shortly (likely to be retained/ on-call stations only).
- Wholetime recruitment concluded. Trainees start their training on 20th February.

Greater Manchester:

DCFO Paul Argyle updated the Forum on the following, on behalf of Greater Manchester:

- Currently in the process of refreshing the 4 year IRMP, which identifies the requirement for a further £14m of savings. This will be the first fire plan of the Mayor.
- Meetings are currently taking place to try to secure a precept increase of 1.9%. Some underspends will be used initially, however these are one-off savings. Therefore precept increases are still required in order to deliver the IRMP.
- Negotiations are underway regarding changes to the crewing system. Branches are out voting at present, the result of which is expected later today.
- Greater Manchester will recruit 100 firefighters in the next financial year, who need to reflect the local community. GM Police have been successful in achieving this during their recruitment, therefore a similar approach will be taken by GMFRS.
- The keys have now been received for the new Safety Centre, which it is anticipated will be fully functional by April.
- A series of reviews are underway to reduce support functions, with voluntary and compulsory redundancy being utilised. As we move into the Combined Authority, some of the support functions such as ICT and HR will become the functions for the Combined Authority.
- The tri-station at Irlam is due to go live later in the year (August).
- Currently operating with 126 fewer firefighters than the established amount. The resulting underspend will be used to purchase appliances.
- Waiting for the Apprenticeship levy in come in in May, to introduce Firefighter recruit apprentices.

Lancashire:

CFO Chris Kenny provided an update on the following, on behalf of Lancashire:

- The creation of a Combined Authority within Lancashire would add an extra tier of governance, however Police and Fire would both be low priority for the Combined Authority.
- Work has been undertaken around identifying a suitable replacement appliance for the ALP's, which are underutilised. An appliance called the "Stinger" has been identified, which is something between an ALP's and a normal appliance; and is capable of puncturing and injecting water. The cost of the "Stinger" is approximately half way between a normal appliance and an ALP. Lancashire are looking at leasing the appliances, which is a low risk option (the appliances would cost approximately £360k each to purchase).
- In terms of recruitment, an advert will be going out in March for transferees to the RDS.
- Looking at changes to the retained salary and injecting £300k to increase the retained pay.
- Working in collaboration with Cheshire and Cumbria to identify alternative, lightweight technical rescue jackets. A procurement exercise will be undertaken shortly.
- With regards to the development of joint ambulance and fire stations, a meeting had taken place with NWS before Christmas to discuss how this could be progressed.

Discussion took place regarding engagement with NWS and what FRA's can potentially offer to NWS to help ease some of the pressure placed on the service.

Merseyside:

Dan Stephens congratulated Paul Hancock on implementing the Station Builds; and Chris Kenny on the development of Aerial technology.

He then provided an update as follows, on behalf of Merseyside:

Station Mergers

- The planning application for the new stations at Saughall Massie was refused on a vote of 7 – 6 at the Planning Committee meeting held on 15th December 2016.
- The Authority has three options, which are to accept the decision and move to the outright closure of West Kirby; to appeal the decision to the Secretary of State; and/ or to submit a revised planning application. The last two options can be undertaken concurrently, which is the intention of Officers.
- Construction is now underway on the joint FRS Police station at Prescott, with a completion date anticipated in the autumn. Overall cost is anticipated at £8m.

- A desktop study has outlined a build cost of circa £8m for the new station at St. Helens to replace Eccleston and Parr Stocks Road.

Budget Setting

- The Authority Budget Meeting will be held on 23rd February 2017 and will also agree the IRMP 2017-20.
- The CFO has identified additional support services and technical savings in order to limit the impact on operational response and to allow the Authority to still meet the 10 minute response standard to life risk incidents on 90% of occasions. Initially the savings distribution was £7m support and technical, £4m from response (total of £11m).
- Of the £11m savings, £1.9m will be delivered from response. This will result in the loss of an additional 48 FF posts, which will be achieved through crewing 4 existing WT appliances on 12 hour WT days with retained cover on a 30 minute recall out of hours.
- A recruit course with 16 trainee Firefighters is due to pass out in February. This cohort will initially be posted to Aintree and Kensington, which are crewed on a days and retained basis already by the previous trainee course, supplemented by experienced Firefighters and Watch Managers. This will form a two pump station at each location to allow the latest cohort of trainees to gain more experience prior to moving on to the next of the stations identified for a change in crewing in around 12 months' time.
- Currently in talks with LJMU over degree apprenticeships, for 300 recruits over the next 10 years.

Police Fire Collaboration

- The outcomes of the Deloitte report have been considered by Chief Officers, the FRA and the PCC.
- The findings of the Deloitte report will now be used as the basis to develop collaboration options across all 18 functional areas for further consideration.
- DS attended a meeting of the Home Office Gold Group yesterday and raised the issue of FRS access to Transformation and Efficiency Funding.

National Resilience

- A project plan has been developed for the transition of the FRSNCC function from LFB to MFRA/ NRAT by 1st April 2017.
- Home Office are in the process of novating the Long Term Capability Management contract across to MFRA. This is planned to take effect by 1st April 2017.
- MFRA will also deliver the NR training contract in conjunction with the sector on a cost recovery model also with effect from 1st April 2017.

It was agreed that the Saughall Massie Report being submitted to the Authority Meeting on 26th January 2017, be shared with the Forum.

PH stated that he would like to visit MFRA to see the National Resilience set up.

It was therefore agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would be hosted by MFRA.

Cllr Doughty commented that he was very interested in the approach taken to integrating recruits into the service.

He also commented on recent conferences he has attended regarding resilience, where he felt that the content was too narrow, focusing only on response – not recovery.

Discussion took place regarding this issue and it was acknowledged that responsibility for the recovery phase lies with the local authorities, not FRA's, although this is an issue being considered at present.

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| 11. | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>The Chair advised that Peter Holland was about to retire.</p> <p><u>It was agreed that the Forum write to him and wish him well for the future.</u></p> <p>The Chair stated the importance of the Forum understanding the changes within CFOA (introduction of the NFCC) and their collaborative work with the LGA; and how the Forum can link in moving forward.</p> <p>The Chair also referenced the new Inspectorate regime and understanding what it will mean for the Forum in the future.</p> <p><u>It was agreed that developments in relation to these items, continue to be monitored by the Forum.</u></p> |
| 12. | <p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>The next meeting of the Forum will be held on 31st May 2017.</p> <p>As resolved, this meeting will be held at the JCC – MFRA Headquarters.</p> |
| | <p>Close of Meeting.</p> |