Present: Councillor Tim Pickstone (Bury) (in the Chair)
Bolton: Councillor Bob Allen
Bury: Councillor Stella Smith
Manchester: Councillor Ben Clay
Oldham: Councillor Colin McLaren
Rochdale: Councillor Raymond Dutton (Substitute)
Salford: Councillor David Jolley
Salford: Councillor Tanya Burch
Stockport: Councillor Dena Ryness
Stockport: Councillor John McGahan
Trafford: Councillor Anne Duffield

In attendance

GMFRS
Jim Wallace, Chief Fire Officer
Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Leon Parkes, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tony Hunter, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Sarah Scoales, Head of Strategy, Planning and Continuous Improvement

TfGM
Dawn Royle, Director of PMO

GMCA
Kevin Lee, Director Mayor’s Office
Joanne Heron, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Jamie Fallon, Governance and Scrutiny Officer

CI11/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Goodwin (Oldham), Kallum Nolan (Rochdale), Teresa Smith (Tameside), Dave Morgan (Trafford), Joanne Marshall (Wigan) and Richard Paver (GMCA Treasurer).

Councillor Stella Smith left the meeting at 6.30pm.

CI12/19 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR 2019/20

Nominations were invited for the position of Chair of the GMCA Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Municipal Year. Councillor Stella Smith proposed Councillor Tim Pickstone and Councillor John McGahan seconded the proposal. The Committee agreed that Councillor Tim Pickstone be appointed.
RESOLVED:

It was unanimously agreed that Councillor Tim Pickstone be appointed as Chair for the GMCA Corporate Issues and Reform Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 municipal year.

CI13/19 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair extended thanks on behalf of the committee to colleagues from GMFRS for hosting the meeting and providing Members with an insightful tour of the excellent facility.

No urgent business was raised.

CI14/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

The Chair reminded Members to complete their annual GMCA Register of Interest Form and return this to the Governance and Scrutiny Officer.

CI15/19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019 be approved as a correct record.

CI16/19 WORK PROGRAMME

Joanne Heron, Statutory Scrutiny Officer, introduced the 2019/20 work programme, which had been populated following the discussions at the last meeting. It was acknowledged that the work programme would need to be updated to include further GMFRS items which would become more apparent after the discussions today.

It was suggested that it would be helpful consider two substantive items per meeting to enable effective scrutiny, albeit some additional items could be included for information. It was agreed that the work programme would be updated to reflect this.

The Committee were reminded that there was no meeting in August, but training had been arranged with Richard Paver, GMCA Treasurer to help Members better scrutinise the budget setting process. The training session was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 13th August at 6pm, GMCA Offices.

RESOLVED:

1. That the work programme be updated to include two substantive items per meeting.

2. That the work programme be updated to include appropriate GMFRS items.
Tony Hunter, Director of Protection, Service Improvement & Performance, presented a report which provided Members with an outline of the Service’s annual performance for 2018/19 against the delivery goals contained within the Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016/20.

Key areas highlighted were as follows:

- It was advised that local level performance was managed by Borough Managers who work with partners locally to address any trends. Borough Managers would be contacting Members to arrange a meeting to discuss the local level performance and associated challenges.
- During 2018/19 there had been a total of 31,786 incidents (fires, false alarms and special service calls) which was a reduction of 3.61% (1,192 fewer incidents) when compared to 2017/18.
- The average response time for the 1st GMFRS appliance to attend an emergency incident this year was 7 minutes 14 seconds and was comparable to the 7 minutes 6 seconds recorded during 2017/18. It was acknowledged that this was the time taken for the 1st appliance to attend the scene once the alert had been received at the fire station.
- Accidental dwelling fires (ADF’s) had decreased by 5% when compared to 2017/18.
- Deliberate fires had decreased by 9% when compared to 2017/18.
- During July 2018, GMFRS were in spate conditions due to the moorland incidents, which took place during the period 25 June 2018 and 18 July 2018. This was the busiest recorded period of operational activity in the history of GMFRS.
- Sadly, during 2018/19, 19 people had died as a result of a fire incident, 16 of which were accidental.
- There had been a total of 14,083 false alarms attended this year, an increase of 1% when compared to 2017/18, 39% of all false alarms originated from an automatic fire alarm (FADA) in a non-domestic property. Members were advised that they would receive further information at a future meeting regarding a pilot which was seeking to reduce the number of false alarms crews attend.
- The prolonged moorland incidents had impacted on the ability for both crews and community safety staff to carry out Safe and Well Visits. A total of 27,191 Safe and Well Visits took place, a decrease of 18% when compared to the number delivered in 2017/18.
- The level of sickness absence had decreased from 4.72% (recorded in 2017/18) to 4.03%.

Members raised the following questions and comments:

- A Member queried whether the level of sickness absence could be broken down by operational staff as well as back room staff. It was confirmed that this information was readily available and would be circulated to the Committee.
- Further clarity was sought in relation to the percentage of female firefighters. GMFRS advised that they were actively continuing to encourage under-represented groups to consider a career in the Fire Service, noting that this had been recognised through Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- A Member requested that Borough Managers share local level information with Members, in order to understand the specific issues, as opposed to the global picture presented. The request was noted.
RESOLVED:

1. That the 2018/19 annual performance report be approved.

2. That further information on the pilot underway to reduce the number of false alarms (FADA) crews attend be provided to the Committee.

3. That the sickness analysis (broken down by frontline staff and back office staff) be circulated to the Committee.

4. That the committee’s request be noted regarding Borough Manager’s providing local level performance when making contact with Members.

CI18/19 PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

Kevin Lee, Director of Mayor’s Office, extended apologies on behalf of the Mayor Andy Burnham who was unable to attend the meeting, noting that he had attended the meeting in March 2019 to set out the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the GMFRS Programme for Change.

Supported by Jim Wallace, Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Dawn Docx, and Assistant Chief Fire Officers Leon Parkes, and Tony Hunter, Members were provided with a presentation (available at Appendix 1) which outlined the facts and the latest position following the end of the consultation on the Programme for Change.

The following key points were raised:

- No final decisions had yet been made and discussions were underway with the trade unions.
- Firefighter numbers would be maintained at or above May 2017 levels for this year.
- The Mayor was determined to avoid compulsory redundancies for support staff.
- To maintain these commitments beyond 2020, GMCA would lobby the Government and request they meet the pensions shortfall and increase funding for fire and rescue services.
- Further information on the response to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) would be provided to the Committee at a future meeting.

Members raised the following questions and comments:

- Members welcomed the presentation.
- Members raised concerns regarding the timing of the consultation which had impacted on the number of opportunities afforded to the Committee to sufficiently scrutinise the proposals. The approach to scrutiny was also questioned, as the Committee had not had the opportunity to scrutinise the issues in any detail, in particularly the impacts/ effects, and the views of others. Following discussion on how best to appropriately scrutinise the proposals, it was proposed that the September meeting would focus on scrutinising the following issues in a deeper way:
  - The proposal to reduce the number of fire fighters on a pump from 5’s to 4’s (with a focus on the effect)
  - The robustness of the plans, given the expediential rate of growth within the city region in particularly inner city core, and the impact of congestion on response times.
- What had changed within the proposals and outline business case following the consultation?
- How the new prevention model would be delivered

*bullet points*

- It was agreed that the Statutory Scrutiny Officer would consult with Members over the summer period in order to identify how effective scrutiny could be facilitated, including how the views of others could be captured.
- Kevin Lee accepted that the timing was not ideal, given the election period, but stressed that the proposals needed to be developed and consulted upon, with a view to addressing the budget deficit and to avoid further consequences for GMFRS.
- Concerns were raised regarding the level of engagement on the consultation. It was felt that a communication should have been shared with all GM councillors. Kevin Lee apologised if Members felt they had not had adequate time to comment on the proposals, noting that they were provided with the OBC in March 19, and their comments from this evening would be considered. The challenges in providing the right balance of information was acknowledged.
- Given the concerns raised, would the consultation be reopened? Jim Wallace advised that the consultation was originally scheduled to last for 6 weeks, but was extended twice, and was open for 12 weeks in total, with responses also included after this period. All responses would be factored into the final report which would be submitted to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Beverley Hughes for decision. It was stressed that the programme needed to continue at pace to enable the organisation to meet the savings expected of them. Kevin Lee reiterated that comments were still being taken into account.
- Concerns were raised regarding the proposal to reduce the number of crews from 5’s to 4’s. Jim Wallace reported that three feasible options had been developed, all of which were financially viable and safe. Kevin Lee added that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had listened to Trade Unions as set out in the Mayor’s letter dated 2nd July 2019 (Appendix 2), and had committed to using the reserves to maintain the level of staffing at or above the level at May 2017 throughout 2019/20 (subject to the Government addressing the pension deficit). It was reiterated that in 70% of cases in GM, the first fire engine arrived with a crewing level of 4, noting that no FRS’s in the country crewed all fire engines as 5’s.
- Further clarity was sought in relation to whether the impact on performance levels was available at a local level. It was confirmed that a two pronged approach had been adopted looking at past performance levels and actual attendance rates across GM. It was agreed that local level data would be circulated to the Committee.
- How could response times for new stations be measured if the sites had not yet been identified? Leon Parkes advised that existing response times were considered, along with where incidents happen, to measure what the response time from the station to the incident might be. It was noted that station could be moved around, and compared against actual data.
- Were response times measured from the point an appliance leaves the station as opposed to when the call was received? It was confirmed that the IRMP does not include the call handling time, however, the 7 minute proposals included the full range; from 999 call to first intervention.
- A Member had been anecdotally informed that a recent two-pump incident had brought the service to the knees. This had supposedly impacted on the attendance time at a fire in Irlam, which took 20 minutes. Had significant incidents such as this, or times when there are large scale events taking place been factored into the average response times? Tony Hunter advised that further information would be circulated to the committee on how average response times were derived. It was emphasised that the instances in question had not brought the service to its knees as the service regularly dealt with two protracted incidents.
Tony Hunter reassured the Committee that GMFRS have a well-maintained reserve fleet based at strategic locations to provide support when required.

- Back in 1994/5 response times in Manchester had been under 5 minutes to attend a category one fire, was this correct? It was confirmed that this time would not have included the call handling time.
- A Member highlighted that there was no reference within the presentation to whether GMFRS were exploring opportunities to work with partners such as other blue light services to make better use of existing resources. It was advised that GMFRS had worked on a number of pilots with GMP and NWAS over the last five years, however, due to ongoing national discussions regarding firefighters pay, this work has been paused for the moment. The joint arrangements already in place with blue light services were highlighted such as the Wigan Hub. It was noted that it was not implicitly outlined within the OBC as to some degree this was classed as business as usual. Currently discussions were underway with GMCA, along with colleagues from NWAS and GMP to consider new site locations, and further opportunities to work collaboratively.
- A Member from Salford highlighted that Salford had a younger than average population in the country, with young males accounting for most of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the area. The invaluable support provided by firefighters and the Prince’s Trust was emphasised, noting that reducing these interventions would most likely have a detrimental impact to the area. Following discussion, it was agreed that the new prevention model would be considered in further detail at the September meeting.
- Members explored whether the impact of the GMSF been considered, along with the number of housing developments, demographic changes and population projections? It was agreed that the Committee would focus on scrutinising this aspect at its September meeting.
- If the government meet the pension deficit of £5.8m, how will we ensure that we will not fall into deficit again? Kevin Lee emphasised that the issue was a result of Government changes to the pension scheme and was a national issue. It was acknowledged that Government had lost their legal case against HMG so must address the deficit; nevertheless if government support was not received the proposals contained within the OBC would need to be revisited.
- A Member requested clarity regarding the context of the removal second fire engines compared with the new fire engines, which were being introduced. It was confirmed that the new fire engines were being introduced to replace ageing fire engines.
- Further clarity was sought in relation to the statement that the number of firefighters would remain at or above the 1121 in post May 2017. Had new firefighters been recruited since this? It was confirmed that due to the high turnover of staff GMFRS had to continuously recruit.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the response to Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) be included within the work programme.
3. That the Committee reconsider the following aspects of Outline Business Case in September 2019:
   - The proposal to reduce the number of fire fighters on a pump from 5’s to 4’s (with a focus on the effect)
- The robustness of the plans, given the expediential rate of growth within the city region in particularly inner city core, and the impact of congestion on response times.
- What had changed following the consultation?
- How the new prevention model would be delivered

4. That the Statutory Scrutiny Officer consult with Members and Officers over the summer period on how the discussions should be facilitated to enable effective scrutiny, including how the views of others could be considered.

5. That the Committee be provided with further information on the methodology used to derive at the 7 minutes average response time and the local level performance levels.

**CI19/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 13 August 2019 at 6pm, GMCA Offices – Budget Training Session

Tuesday 17 September 2019 at 6pm, GMCA Offices – Committee meeting

**RESOLVED:**

That the date of the training session and next meeting be noted.

**CI20/19 GMCA REGISTER OF KEY DECISIONS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Register of Key Decisions be noted.
GMFRS Programme for Change

GMCA Corporate Issues & Reform Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting

16th July 2019
Background

May 17
- Mayor elected, taking over responsibility for fire and rescue services from the Greater Manchester Fire Authority
- Concerns raised by staff and FBU both prior to and post the Mayors appointment
- Manchester Arena Terrorist attack, leading to firefighters expressing their anger about decisions which delayed their attendance

Dec 17
- Mayor and Deputy Mayor concerned about the financial position of the Service and high vacancy rate amongst firefighters
- IRMP and associated efficiency plans suspended due to lack of evidence
- Fire Cover Review subsequently initiated to determine evidence-based fire cover requirements across Greater Manchester

Mar 18
- Kerslake Review into Manchester Arena Attack published featuring a number of recommendations for GMFRS
- Mayor announced root and branch review of GMFRS

Apr 18
- Programme for Change (PfC) commissioned with the aim to develop a coherent case for change, addressing the challenges faced by the Service
- Work commenced to develop Outline Business Case, informed by the Fire Cover Review, together with options for a new Operating model for GMFRS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GMFRS Programme for Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frontline first emergency service</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refocus on frontline delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laying the foundations for an organisation that is sustainable, affordable, and delivers greater public value</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A stronger organisation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keeping more firefighters in communities than previously proposed in the IRMP</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Integrated with place-based teams, targeting resources and meeting the needs of communities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence-based proposals</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maximising fire cover across Greater Manchester with available resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firefighters at the heart of the Service</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• More devolved power to the frontline</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supported by an organisation, which has a culture of trust, respect and accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Improved working conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modern facilities, better training and equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family-friendly working arrangements</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Review Approach

• **Listen** - Enabling staff to raise their concerns and ensuring feedback is fed into proposals

• **Learn** – Incorporating learnings from major incidents

• **Change** – Ensuring improvements are made quickly where possible, together with a longer-term delivery plan
Outline Business Case Priorities

• More devolved power to the frontline
• Focus on the role of the firefighter
• Place-based approach and improved partnership working
• Evidence-based Fire Cover proposals
• Building a culture of trust, respect and accountability
• Refreshed Vision and Purpose
• New delivery model for Prevention and person centred risk assessments
• Increased focus on Protection
• Sustainable & affordable delivery model
Developing the Outline Business Case

• New target operating model developed
• Fire Cover Review – 33 work streams
• Over 300 models developed / external validation undertaken
• Narrowed down to 3 feasible options for fire cover in GM
• Reform of Prevention – fire fighters delivering and aligning to place based working
• Review of Protection – responding to Grenfell and reforming our approach (including fire fighters undertaking low level fire safety)
• Reform of administration provision
The Proposed Package

• The removal of six 2nd fire engines at: Manchester Central, Blackley, Heywood, Moss Side, Oldham and Eccles;
• Crewing levels of 4 on all fire engines;
• Alter shift start and finish times and staffing numbers at the six day crewed stations;
• Remove a further two 2nd fire engines from Salford and Gorton;
• Undertake three station mergers at Bolton (Bolton Central & Bolton North), Manchester (Manchester Central & Phillips Park) & Stockport (Stockport & Whitehill);
• Impact on performance at GM level for the 1st fire engine is just 10 seconds. The least impact of any option explored;
• New delivery model for Prevention, Protection, Youth Engagement & Administration;
Re-investing in the future Service

Short-Term
• Introduction of a new shift system
• New annual leave arrangements implemented

Long-Term
• Re-investing in local stations and improved facilities
• Investment in operational appliances and equipment
• Improved training and development
• Investment in supporting technology and systems
Outline Business Case Consultation Dates

• 14\textsuperscript{th} March - Consultation meetings with representative bodies (Mayor)
• 29\textsuperscript{th} March - Public consultation commenced
• 31\textsuperscript{st} May – Consultation closed - consultation feedback being analysed and report currently being compiled
• 29\textsuperscript{th} July - Consultation headlines presented to steering group

• Weekly trade union meetings taken place since 14\textsuperscript{th} March
Consultation Overview

• The consultation was publicised widely and successfully, featuring in 31 news articles, 109 posts on social media. Posts on Facebook reached more than 208,000 people.

• Twitter posts also reached impressions in excess of 260,000, with one explanatory thread reaching 30,000 people. There was reasonably high engagement with the activity on social media.

• The communications and engagement team also engaged with representative organisations in the private and community and voluntary sectors to encourage participation in the consultation.

• Significant engagement with elected members, with all MPs and councillors sent the full business case, a presentation document summarising the contents, and a shorter summary document.

• Briefings to Leaders Strategy, Wider Leadership Team, Bolton and Wigan full Councils.

• An offer was made to all MPs and councils for members of the Corporate Leadership Team to meet to discuss any queries and concerns, which was taken up by a small number of elected members. Further communications were sent to elected members throughout the consultation process.
Who Responded and what did they say

Key public sector stakeholders

Four MP’s – only three were detailed responses (Rebecca Long-Bailey, Kate Green, Andrew Gwynne and Sir David Crausby)

- Understanding of the pressure that central government is putting on public spending
- Predominantly around operational issues (riding 4’s, reduction in operational resources – 9 fire engines, 194 FF’s
- Change of shift system at non-SDS stations
- Merging of 6 fire stations, and the opening of three new ones
- Removal of some non-uniformed staff, with FF taking on the work
- Increased future engagement with parliamentary colleagues

Other Fire and Rescue Services (Surrey, South Wales, Lancashire)

- Surrey – Safe Drive Stay Alive
- South Wales – Impact on community safety, specifically around partnerships with health and social care.
- Lancashire – Cross boundary working, section 13 and section 16.
Who Responded and what did they say

- GM Local Authorities (Oldham, Salford, Stockport, Rochdale, Trafford (labour group), Bury)
  - Recognition of the challenging financial landscape
  - Salford / Stockport – more mention of change to prevention delivery and needing reassurance that quality will remain
  - Salford – OBC doesn’t give any indication that the 29 risks (for Salford, outlined in Emergency Plans) have been considered
  - Trafford (labour group) – concern that the consultation has been inadequate

- Greater Manchester Police (multiple responses)
  - Programme Challenger and the positive impact of the Crime and Disorder Co-ordinator
  - FCR – ‘This is an operational decision for GMFRS’
  - Blue Light Collaboration – welcome discussions about – ‘Forcing Entry’ (MOU 2017), searching for missing people and in time – integration of assets to improve interoperability.

- Health and Social Care Partners (public health teams in Tameside, Bolton and Stockport), GMHSCP, Salford Royal, GM Mental Health NHS FT
  - Focussed far more on the potential impact of delivering prevention services in a different way
  - Lack of detail in the OBC about how operational crews will carry out some of the additional prevention work; concern that it won’t be consistent.
Other group / organisation stakeholders

- Largely focussed around their specific geographical area; for example – Bolton Community and Voluntary Services, only completed a response about the merging of Bolton stations

- Respondent often described their positive, collaborative relationship with GMFRS and their own organisations contribution and the desire to carry on with this work (with a preference to continue ‘as is’ but recognising that they might have to work with GMFRS in a different way).

Prince’s Trust made several responses –
- Described current relationship (as an organisation) and personal information of the respondent
- Praise for current delivery of the service (vital part of the community)

Or organisations linked to Prince’s Trust
- Socialise (community garden)
- Positive Steps
- Manchester Mind

... This responses are largely made up of compliments for the service currently provided by the Youth Engagement team

Responses demonstrated a limited reference to the wider OBC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>What did it include?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of the Firefighter</td>
<td>▪ OBC doesn’t accurately reflect how FF spend their time; concern around additional workload and capacity – priority for attending operational incidents and time for quality training.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Repeat query of statement that FF want to do more prevention, protection and youth engagement work; reality is that this was only a small portion who wanted the role to be reviewed / expanded with appropriate training and pay (only fire context).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Not trained to carry out specialist work; or trained to a high enough standard – plus added issue of being turned out, mid-activity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Needs to be developed alongside national FBU negotiations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ EMR broadly welcomed, but with sufficient training and recompense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 + inbox</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Cover Review</td>
<td>▪ Ridership figures by far the most contentious issue raised by staff.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Inexperienced crew / apprentices and the workforce planning to manage this.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ No major objections to the stations mergers, although Q’s around the need for new stations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Other reoccurring concerns around the OBC not taking suitable consideration of new developments (in particular high-rise), resilience at large and protracted incidents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 + inbox</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Place Based Delivery*</td>
<td>▪ Primary concerns; quality of service by FF, no time for quality relationships with partners, feeling that proposals are vague and no consideration for differing Districts approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inbox (+ 35)</td>
<td>▪ OBC doesn’t recognise the specialist involvement of CSA’s and others with certain groups (youth engagement and complex cases).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Removal of safe and well targets are broadly welcomed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ PBW needs to be developed and delivered by the same teams to allow for continuous improvement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Need to consider existing evaluation of current prevention service delivery.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Positives included – collaborative working with partners and upskilling staff (who are willing to embrace change).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps

• Interim structural changes to explore the implications of implementing the OBC
• Full consultation outcome report to Mayor
• Letter to GM Leaders and GM Councillors from GM Mayor (2nd July)
• Mayoral decision
• Programme management arrangements
• Implementation of proposals
Governance Structure

Steering Group

Programme Board

- PMO
- External Programme Assurance Arrangements (TfGM)
- Design Authority

Workstreams
Key Dates:

- 08/07/19: Implementation recommendations report drafted for review
- 16/07/19: Leaders Strategy meeting
- 16/07/19: Presentation to Corporate Issues & Reform Overview & Scrutiny
- 23/07/19: Programme Board
- 29/07/19: Steering Group
- 06/08/19: Deputy Mayors Executive Meeting
- 27/08/19: Programme Board
- 05/09/19: Steering Group
- 17/9/19: Corporate Issues & Reform Overview & Scrutiny
- CA end September (date tbc)
HMICFRS Report Headlines

**Good**
- Understanding risk and responding to emergencies
- Making the Service affordable now and in the future

**Requires Improvement**
- Preventing fires and other emergencies
- Protecting the public through fire regulation
- Responding to national risks
- Promoting the right values and culture

**Inadequate**
- Fairness and promoting diversity

**Note - Full HMICFRS Report to be presented at future meeting**
Questions?
TO: ALL GREATER MANCHESTER MPs

Dear Colleague

GREATER MANCHESTER FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

I know that many of you are understandably concerned about the funding and resource challenges faced by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. Given that, I thought it might be helpful for you to have a note setting out the facts and the latest position following the end of the consultation on the Programme for Change.

First, it is important to set out the background. When I came into office in 2017, I inherited:

- a plan to cut the number of pumps and firefighters across Greater Manchester (Integrated Risk Management Programme - 2016) which was being implemented by the former Fire Authority
- a high level (167) of frontline firefighter vacancies
- fire stations in a state of disrepair, some with no functioning female toilets or changing facilities, and
- a budget that was unsustainable and required savings of £7 million.

In late 2017, I suspended that plan following concerns about fire cover in our communities caused by the vacancy rate and inadequate overtime arrangements. Since then, I have introduced:

- an accelerated firefighter recruitment programme to reduce vacancies
- improved overtime with fairer recompense
- a family-friendly shift system in line with requests by firefighters, and
- a new annual leave system which allows people more choice of time off.

Far from cutting the frontline, I have strengthened it.

In May 2017, there were 1,121 firefighters. If I had left the 2016 IRMP in place, we would by now have only 1,058. Instead, the number stands at 1,183.

So there are more firefighters today in Greater Manchester than when I came into office.

As a result of all of these changes, it has been acknowledged by FBU colleagues that morale has improved. But I know the union has concerns about the proposals to change crewing levels on our fire engines which are shared by colleagues.
The reality is that, in 2017, GMFRS was riding 4s for most call-outs. Also, more than half of fire services across the country have already implemented a crewing system based on 4s.

That said, having considered the responses to the consultation, I accept the need for caution in making any changes. So, for this financial year, I am proposing to maintain the number of firefighters at or above the May 2017 number. This will allow present arrangements to be maintained and more time for discussion with the FBU about the number of fire engines on the run and the crewing levels that can realistically be achieved. It will also give us an opportunity to present a case to the Government as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review for more funding for fire services.

However, given that GMFRS has seen its budget cut by nearly £20 million since 2010, the need to find savings has not gone away. So, alongside the number of fire engines and stations, we will also have to look at the number of support staff within the organisation whilst being determined to avoid any compulsory redundancies and treating our staff fairly at all times.

For this year, we will be able to meet the budget deficit through the use of an underspend in the operational budget and reserves.

There has been a suggestion in some quarters that GMCA has “raided” fire reserves. This is not true. I can give a clear commitment that fire assets and reserves will be used for the fire service. None of the reserves previously held by the Fire Authority have been used for other GMCA functions.

But our reserves will not last forever. If the financial outlook for fire services stays the same, and the Government fails to address these issues in the Spending Review, we will have no choice but to come back to the proposals in the Programme for Change.

That is why we need your support in presenting a united front to the Government in calling for an end to austerity and a properly-funded fire service going forward.

From the start of next year, we will face a pension shortfall of £5.3 million in GMFRS as a result of Government changes to the pension scheme. This needs to be met in full by the Government or our funding challenge will get much more worse.

As you can see, these are difficult issues and are not of my nor Greater Manchester’s making. But we have to face up to them and, in doing so, I am trying at all times to adopt a “frontline first” approach which seeks to maximise the fire cover for the communities you represent.

More positively, I am pleased that the recent HMICFRS inspection found that GMFRS remains good at responding to fires and I am committed to ensuring this remains the case. In any scenario, we will maintain our average response time at 7 minutes 30 seconds - one of the fastest in the country and a full minute faster than the national average.
So in summary:

- No final decisions have yet been made and we are in discussions with the trade unions.
- We will maintain firefighter numbers at or above May 2017 levels for this year.
- I am determined to avoid compulsory redundancies for support staff.
- To maintain these commitments beyond 2020, we will need to lobby the Government to meet the pensions shortfall and to increase funding for fire and rescue services.

I would be grateful for your support in Parliament for making this case to the Government.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Andy Burnham
Mayor of Greater Manchester

cc GM Leaders
    GM Councillors