North West Fire & Rescue Forum AGM

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2016

At
NW Fire Control, Lingley Mere, Warrington

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

Agenda Item	Minute
1.	**Appointment of Chair** Nominations for the appointment of a Chair for 2016/17 were requested. Cllr F De 'Molfetta nominated Cllr D Hanratty. This nomination was seconded by Cllr Acton and unanimously agreed by the Forum. Cllr D Hanratty was therefore appointed as Chair for 2016/17; and presided over the remainder of the meeting.
2.	**Appointment of Vice-Chair** Nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chair were requested. Cllr D Hanratty nominated Cllr D Acton. This nomination was seconded by Cllr De 'Molfetta and unanimously agreed by the Forum. Cllr D Action was therefore appointed as Vice-Chair for 2016/17.
3.	**Chairman's Welcome and Introduction** The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and opened proceedings.
4.	**Apologies** Apologies were received as shown in the table above.
5.	**Declarations of Interest** No declarations of interest were made in relation to items of business on the Agenda.
6.	**Items Requiring Urgent Attention** There were no matters requiring urgent attention.
7.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting** The minutes of 27th April 2016 were agreed as a true record. The Chair informed the Forum that representative of NWAS had been requested to attend this meeting to discuss collaboration however they were unable to attend, therefore the meeting will need to be re-arranged. NWAS have been asked to inform the Chair of dates when they would be available; and a special meeting will then be arranged around their availability.
8.	**<u>Actions from the Last Meeting</u>** **Action 1 – Lobbying**

	The Chair advised that an email had been drafted and circulated, which all Members of the Forum had been requested to share with their MP's. This is to remain on the action log and continue to be monitored. **Action 2 – Funding Streams** The Chair advised that due to commitments, it has proven difficult to arrange a meeting. Due to a change in circumstances (Brexit), Members were asked whether it was worth continuing to pursue this. Members confirmed that it was not. Therefore it was agreed that this item be closed and removed. **Action 3 - Procurement** The Chair advised this this was on the Agenda for the meeting as a separate item. **Action 4 – Policing and Crime Bill** The Chair advised that this is ongoing and will remain on the action log. **Action 5 – April 2017 Meeting Date** Discussion took place around the proposed alternative date – 24th May 2017. Cllr S Nelson advised that this later date would clash with other commitments and requested that the date remain as it was. (The issue of meeting dates was discussed in further detail under Item 12)
9.	**Chairman's Update** The Chair advised that there were no issues to update the Forum on.
10.	**Constitution** The Chair stated that there had not been any issues with the current Constitution; and therefore requested that the Forum approve the existing Constitution. It was agreed that the Forum continue with the existing Constitution.
11.	**Priorities Going Forward** Members considered priorities for the Forum for 2016/17. The Chair suggested that the North West Chief's work streams link into the Forum, to ensure that Chairs and Lead Members are kept fully aware of issues discussed . It was suggested that at each meeting, a specific item/ issue be discussed, to help share best practice. Another priority identified was around future governance arrangements for the Fire and Rescue Service. Significant discussion took place around the Devolution Deals in progress within Greater Manchester and Merseyside. Cllr Acton provided the Forum with an update on progress within Greater Manchester. Although details are yet to be finalised, a Fire Committee will be established consisting of between 15 and 21 Members. The 10 district councils of Greater Manchester will appoint 1 Member each, with the remainder being selected

	by the Elected Mayor, ensuring gender balance and political proportionality. The Chair of the Committee will also be appointed by the Elected Mayor. The Elected Mayor will have overall responsibility for budget setting, however the day-to-day functions will be run by the Committee. Greater Manchester have paved the way - making the case for retaining a Committee comprising of elected representatives, responsible for fire related matters. The Chair commented that he hoped for a similar model within Merseyside; and requested a copy of the paper from Manchester, to share with the Liverpool City Region Leaders. A further question was raised concerning who the Chief Fire Officer will report to; and it was advised that this would ultimately be the Elected Mayor. Cllr Acton suggested that another priority for the Forum should be around monitoring arrangements for the Inspection of Fire and Rescue Services. He advised that Theresa May has indicated that there should be some form of Independent Inspectorate. This has been discussed by the LGA who are not adverse to the suggestion, but are keen to not get into a position where Fire and Rescue Services are being over inspected. A further priority identified was around flooding/ resilience and sharing lessons learnt. Dan Stephens advised that the report from the Letwin Review is due out next week, which should address some of the issues and contain recommendations. It was suggested that the report be circulated once available; and be included on the agenda for the next meeting for discussion. <u>It was agreed that:</u> a) the following be priorities for the Forum going forward: • **Updates on North West Chief's Work Streams** – provided at alternate meetings. Suggestions for issues/ themes to be discussed, to be submitted in advance. • **Monitoring progress on Governance Arrangements** • **Monitoring arrangements for the inspection of Fire and Rescue Services** • **Sharing lessons learnt around flooding and resilience** b) A letter be sent on behalf of the Forum to any new Fire Minister appointed. c) The Letwin Review Report be circulated to all Members of the Forum once released; and be included on the Agenda for the next meeting for discussion.
12.	**Dates and Venues for Future Meetings** Discussion took place around arrangements for future meetings; and which days and times would be best to ensure optimal attendance. It was agreed that Wednesday's would be best, with a start time of 10:30am. <u>It was noted that the draft dates were Wednesday's, therefore the following dates would stand, but at the earlier start time of 10:30am:</u>

	• 18th January 2017 • 24th May 2017 • 19th July 2017 • 18th October 2017 **Regional Procurement Update** Chris Kenny provided the Forum with an overview of the Regional Procurement Update paper, requested by the Forum at its last meeting. The paper highlights the collaborative procurement work undertaken as a North West Region. Questions were raised around disposal of equipment and it was confirmed that this was addressed in each Authority's Financial Regulations. The Chair thanked all involved in putting the paper together.

13.	**North West FRS Updates** **Cumbria:** John McVay provided the Forum with an update on behalf of Cumbria, as follows: • In order to deal with the challenging efficiency savings required, Day Crewing Plus had been put forward as an alternative duty system. However, the decision has now been taken not to pursue this. As the savings are still required, work is currently underway to identify alternative crewing models, alongside re-shaping the management structure. This has seen Cumbria sharing a Chief Fire Officer with Cheshire – an arrangement which is working well. • Cumbria were successful in obtaining £1.68m of transformational funding to create a "Blue Light Hub". The process is underway to finalise plans, with building works planned to commence towards the back end of the year. • Now Day Crewing Plus is not going ahead – a process of vacancy management is underway. • Due to the retirement profile and succession planning requirements, Cumbria will be advertising for transfers; and they will be recruiting between 20 and 25 firefighters over the next 2 years. • Initial discussions have taken place with the new PCC. • Cumbria are behind the curve at the moment in terms of EMR/ Co-Responding, therefore there will be a push moving forward towards the health agenda. • Cumbria are looking to move towards 12 hour shifts, with early discussions having taken place with Trade Unions. • Firefighter Apprentice Scheme is established, which has seen 8 apprentices recruited in the first year, 4 last year and a further 4 for this year. It is hoped that most will be offered full time firefighter positions on completion. • Cumbia continue to do the best they can to deliver against the local and national agenda. **Cheshire:** Alex Waller provided the Forum with the following update on behalf of Cheshire: • The recent floods have highlighted that Cheshire do not have sufficient water rescue capabilities at the moment. Therefore, it is planned to expand this across more stations. • As it is important to ensure that duty systems are as cost effective as possible, a mid year review was undertaken on the implementation of 12 hour shifts. This highlighted that the new duty system is working fine and interestingly, productivity has increased and the number of Safe & Well Visits undertaken has been double the target. • Approval has just been given for a new Day Duty Model. This will see fire stations crewed Monday to Friday 9-5, with staff on call over the weekend and nights. This duty system will cost £350k per year compared to £850k per year for whole time. It will also ensure that community work can still be

undertaken, providing value for money. The introduction of this system will mean there will be 5 different duty systems in operation within Cheshire.

- A new Flexi-Duty System has been developed, which will save money whilst doubling the number of officers available. This has been signed off by FOA and has almost reached sign-off stage with FBU.
- 2 new hydraulic platforms have been purchased. These will replace those existing, which will be removed from service.
- Sign off has been provided for an on call reward scheme, which will see increases in pay directly linked to the availability of pumps.
- EMR trial is up and running.

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Greater Manchester:

Peter O'Reilly updated the Forum on the following, on behalf of Greater Manchester:

- In order to make the required £15m savings, 2 new duty systems have been introduced - including 12hr shifts which have been through consultation and approved for implementation on 1st April.
- A process will commence to recruit 26 firefighters.
- Community Risk Intervention Team - next steps are to implement other elements, for example falls in the home, alongside undertaking EMR.
- Manchester are also looking at back office savings, and it is hoped that some can be achieved through Devo Manc and working more collaboratively.
- All staff will be trained and equipped to respond to water rescue incidents.
- GMF&R are now represented on nearly all Health and Wellbeing Boards across the County.
- There have been approximately 5,000 more calls to respond to EMR incidents; and collaboration with NWAS continues, with NWAS now sharing more stations.
- Safe and Well has been rolled out across the County; and is now recognised nationally under CFOA work streams, with most F&RA's adopting the concept.
- Firefighters at 4 stations are now responding on behalf of the Police to low level welfare incidents.

Questions were raised around the 12hr shift start times. It was confirmed that Cheshire start their shifts at 8:00am and 8:00pm; whilst in Merseyside it is 8:30am and 8:30pm. Dan Stephens advised that for days only crewing shift times are 10:00am to 10:00pm as these hours provide the best opportunity to undertake Safe and Well visits and other community safety activity.

Lancashire:

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

- 2 new aerial appliances have been purchased through the framework developed by Manchester.

	• Lancashire have recently held their annual “Mayors Day”. This is an opportunity to display/ demonstrate equipment and the work of the F&RS; and works well in securing the Mayor as an “Ambassador” for the F&RS. • In terms of duty systems, the predominant system within Lancashire is retained. By the end of the year, there is likely to be around 600 whole time firefighters, with the pump at Lancaster reverting from whole time to retained. • For this year, a video has been produced for the Annual Performance Report, which has been positively received. • With regards to flood response, the Authority have recently approved the introduction of and training around the use of flood suits. • There has been engagement with the PCC following Theresa May’s speech as it is believed that Lancashire F&RA and Lancashire Police can demonstrate strong collaboration already, with no evidence that it would be any better should the 2 organisations be merged. There has also been a joint meeting with the Police to formalise evidence of working together. • Lancashire F&RA and Lancashire Police have now launched a joint drone. • With regards to the Retained Duty System availability levels are at 90%. The duty system is becoming under stress as availability is dropping; and work is currently underway to look at how this can be made more attractive. **Merseyside:** Dan Stephens provided an update as follows, on behalf of Merseyside: <u>Station Mergers</u> • Work on Prescot has now commenced. • The planning application for Saughall Massie will be submitted on Friday and will be considered at the Planning Committee on 20th October. • Investigative work is being undertaken at the Canal Street site in St Helens to establish the extent of the ground contamination and therefore the extent of remediation that will be required prior to any build. <u>EMR trial</u> • The FBU are opposing any further roll out of the trial despite having initially requested that all stations partake. This is due to the 1% pay offer and the intimation by National Officials that the undertaking of EMR would be linked to pay negotiations. • Officers are continuing to press for the trial to be extended for a number of reasons including the number of additional lives to be saved, in order to gather further information over the impact on response times and to inform future shift start finish times. <u>Lead Authority for National Resilience</u>

- MFRA took on Lead Authority for National Resilience with effect from 1st July.
- The transition from CNR was seamless with NRAT operations continuing to function with no impact despite a 25% reduction in funding.
- MFRA have also taken on Lead Authority responsibility for UK ISAR and the deployment of the UK Emergency medical Team Field Hospital.

Police Fire Collaboration

- Delloite have been appointed as the external consultants to undertake a review of transactional and professional support services. The review will commence imminently and will extend over 3 months at a cost of £270k which has been apportioned on a 50/50 split between MFRA and Merseyside Police.

Firefighter recruitment

- The latest recruit process has concluded with 16 successful applications due to commence initial training on 6th September. The new Firefighters will be conditioned to a 12 hour day shift followed by a 12 hour retained shift and will be utilised for days only crewing on appliances across Merseyside.

Staff Survey

- The results of the Staff Survey are due to be received shortly, which can be shared with the Forum.

The Chair informed the Forum that the previous Staff Survey had produced fairly negative results. Following this, every endeavour has been made to improve communication with staff and keep them informed of the difficult decisions to be made, through PO Briefings, Elected Members Station Visits and Staff Engagement Days. Through this engagement, it is hoped that staff now understand the challenges facing the Authority and what they are trying to achieve. He highlighted that on Merseyside, the relationship with all Trade Unions is the best it has been, which has had a positive impact on morale.

The Chair also made reference to a comment by the Fire Minister regarding the Statement of Assurance not reflecting difficulties facing the F&RA. He asked the Forum to consider requesting that it is made clearer in their own Statements of Assurance.

Cllr Acton commented that the Government will argue that F&RS' have managed the cuts well, however they need to understand the impact on resilience and that if they continue to cut F&RS', there will reach a point when they will not have the necessary resources at the point of a major incident.

9.	**Any Other Business** <u>Meeting with NWAS</u> The Chair advised that once NWAS have provided availability for a meeting, dates will be circulated and the date convenient for most will be selected.
	Close of Meeting.