

Greater Manchester Police, Fire & Crime Panel

Date: 10th June 2025

Subject: GMFRS Fire Plan 2025-2029

Report of: Kate Green, Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities

Purpose of Report

This report presents Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) Fire Plan for the period 2025–2029. It outlines the strategic objectives, direction, priorities, and commitments of GMFRS over the next four years. The Fire Plan is part of the Service’s Community Risk Management Plan and is designed to improve safety outcomes, enhance emergency response capabilities, and align with broader city-region objectives such as the Greater Manchester Strategy, Live Well, and Housing First.

Recommendations:

The Police, Fire and Crime Panel is requested to:

1. Note the consultation process in relation to the GMFRS Fire Plan 2025-29 and how responses from residents, staff, and stakeholders have shaped the final proposed version of the GMFRS Fire Plan.
2. Consider the proposed GMFRS Fire Plan 2025–2029 attached at Appendix 1 in accordance with its statutory oversight role under article 5B of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) Order 2017.
3. Make a report or recommendations to the Mayor on the draft priorities and objectives set out therein.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

The Fire Plan places a strong emphasis on equality, diversity, and inclusion, with a commitment to building a workforce that reflects Greater Manchester’s communities. Initiatives include targeted recruitment, leadership development for underrepresented groups, and embedding the NFCC Core Code of Ethics. The Plan also supports the

BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework and includes actions to improve accessibility and engagement with marginalised communities. A robust Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) sits alongside the Fire Plan and has been scrutinised and approved by the EIA Working Group (see appendix 2).

On sustainability, the Plan aligns with the Greater Manchester Five-Year Environment Plan and commits to achieving carbon neutrality by 2038. GMFRS has already reduced direct emissions by 27% since 2018/19 and will continue to invest in decarbonising its estate, transitioning to a low-carbon fleet, and reducing environmental impacts through operational practices.

Risk Management

The Fire Plan sets a four-year strategic direction, supported by an Annual Delivery Plan that is refreshed each year. This ensures GMFRS can respond to emerging risks and opportunities, and reallocate resources as needed. Progress is reported through an Annual Delivery Report, which informs the following year's plan. Oversight is provided by the Deputy Mayor's Executive, the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, and steering group.

The Plan is underpinned by a Strategic Assessment of Risk (SAoR), which identifies and evaluates current and emerging threats—including climate change, terrorism, high-rise fires, and public health emergencies. The SAoR informs both the Fire Plan and Annual Delivery Plan, which together form GMFRS's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). GMFRS continues to work closely with partners to ensure a resilient, integrated emergency response, supported by joint training and data-sharing.

Legal Implications

Under Article 6 of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) Order 2017, the Mayor is responsible for approving the local risk plan.

Under Article 5B of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) Order 2017, before issuing a local risk plan, the Mayor must send the draft priorities and objectives to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and have regard to any report or recommendations made by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in relation to the draft priorities and objectives in accordance with section 28(3) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Mayor must have regard to any report or recommendations made by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in relation to the draft priorities and objectives and as soon as is reasonably practicable, give the Police, Fire and Crime Panel a response to any such report or recommendations, and publish the response in such manner as the Mayor considers appropriate. If the Mayor issues a local risk plan, the Mayor must—

- (a) send a copy of the issued local risk plan, or the variation, to the chief fire officer; and
- (b) publish a copy of the issued plan, or the variation, in such manner as the Mayor considers appropriate.

This legal framework ensures that the Panel plays a critical role in holding the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to account for the strategic direction and delivery of fire and rescue services in Greater Manchester. The Panel's engagement is essential to ensuring transparency, community alignment, and statutory compliance in the development and implementation of the Fire Plan.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The Plan outlines a continued focus on financial sustainability and public value. GMFRS has achieved £5 million in savings since 2021 and plans further efficiencies, including £0.677 million in 2025/26. Revenue pressures remain due to reduced central government funding, requiring increased reliance on precept income and productivity gains. The Plan includes strategies to reduce false alarms, increase income generation, and improve operational efficiency.

Financial Consequences – Capital

A £38 million investment programme is underway to modernise GMFRS's estate, including new community fire stations and refurbishments to support operational readiness, staff wellbeing, and environmental sustainability. Capital investment also supports digital transformation, fleet upgrades, and training infrastructure. These investments are essential to delivering the Plan's objectives and ensuring long-term service resilience.

Number of attachments to the report:

Appendix 1 - GMFRS Fire Plan 2025 - 2029

Appendix 2 - Fire Plan 2025-29 Equality Impact Assessment

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

N/A

Background Papers

- [GMFRS Fire Plan 21-25](#)
- GMFRS Annual Strategic Assessment of Risk

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution

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? N/A

Bee Network Committee

N/A

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

N/A

BACKGROUND

1. Greater Manchester is a diverse and rapidly growing city-region with a population nearing 2.9 million. It includes major infrastructure, industrial zones, and some of the most deprived communities in the UK. GMFRS is one of the largest fire and rescue services in England, operating across 500 square miles with 41 fire stations and over 1,700 staff. The Service responds to approximately 41,000 emergency calls annually and plays a vital role in public safety, community resilience, and regional development.
2. The Fire Plan 2025-2029 is our overarching strategy for the next four years, placing GMFRS at the heart of the Mayor's ambitions for Greater Manchester and central to our roadmap for creating an outstanding fire and rescue service. Our draft plan has been produced in collaboration with Mayor Andy Burnham, Deputy Mayor Kate Green, and CFO Dave Russel.

INTRODUCTION

3. This Fire Plan builds on the achievements of the previous plan (2021–2025), during which GMFRS made significant progress in emergency response, cultural transformation, and community engagement. The Plan seeks to effectively deliver GMFRS's statutory functions as well as the city-region's wider ambitions around Live Well, Housing First, Vision Zero, and the Mbacc.
4. The Plan reflects extensive consultation with over 4,000 stakeholders, including residents, staff, and partners.

CONSULTATION

5. The development of the Fire Plan 2025–2029 was underpinned by a comprehensive participation and consultation process, ensuring the voices of residents, staff, and partners were at the forefront of the strategy's development.
6. Engagement on the Plan was initiated at earliest stage of our planning, to allow residents, staff and stakeholders to participate in the development of GMFRS's strategic direction over the next four years. Feedback from this early engagement was used to develop the draft Plan's priorities and commitments according to their wishes and needs.
7. The formal consultation on the draft Plan was conducted over an eight-week period, and gathered further views from residents, staff, and stakeholders. The consultation period provided a robust platform for meaningful dialogue, ensuring that the final Fire Plan reflects the priorities and expectations of the communities it serves.

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Consultation Activities

8. With regards to our participation and consultation activities, a wide range of methods were employed to gather diverse perspectives, including:

Public engagement:

- Online polls and surveys reached over 3,800 residents.
- Eight focus groups engaged 64 residents in in-depth discussions.
- A formal consultation survey via GM Consult received 174 responses.
- Older residents were consulted through dedicated listening sessions involving 23 individuals and 3 VCFSE organisations.

Internal engagement:

- Over 50 suggestions were submitted via internal digital discussion boards.
- Directorate workshops and network meetings were held across GMFRS.
- A management feedback survey gathered 34 responses, with 71% of briefings held at fire stations.

Stakeholder engagement:

- An extensive, in-depth engagement session was undertaken with the GM Equalities Alliance.
- Information was shared via the GMCA Equality Panel facilitators.
- GMFRS Group Managers engaged on the Plan with their Community Safety Partnerships.
 - Letters were sent to all Chief Fire Officers and Local Authority Chief Executive Officers

Key Findings

9. The consultation revealed strong public and staff support for the proposed priorities, with nuanced feedback that informed refinements to the final plan .
10. The online poll and residents' survey used to develop the draft plan for consultation reached over 3,800 Greater Manchester residents.

Higher priorities were:

- **Effective Spending:** 75% emphasised the importance of effective spending of public money.
- **Preventing Emergencies:** 75% highlighted the need to prioritise work that prevents emergencies.
- **Safety of Homes and Workplaces:** 73% agreed that this is crucial.

At the other end of the scale, the **lower priorities** were:

- **Environmental Impact:** 54% considered minimising the service's impact as important
- **Community Engagement:** 56% felt we should prioritise engagement
- **Reflecting Community Diversity:** 64% agreed with recruiting people who reflect GM.

11. The resident focus groups reached 64 GM Residents via eight separate focus groups.

- Participants largely agree that **Priority One (prevention and protection)** is important. It was loosely interpreted as 'working to prevent emergencies before they happen
- Participants interpreted **Priority Two (emergency response)** as the 'given' or 'must have' priority. Most people associate this priority with quick response times and effective handling of emergencies
- Participants views on **Priority Three (culture, sustainability and service excellence)** vary between each area. Service excellence is generally assumed to relate to emergency response. Sustainability of the service is largely seen as unclear and least important of all priorities. Opinions on prioritising inclusivity vary as some had reservations about the recruitment process.

12. The formal consultation on the draft Plan that was developed using resident, stakeholder, and staff participation received 174 responses.

Priority One: Help Make Our Communities Safer and More Resilient

- 96% of respondents strongly agreed / agreed with this priority.
- Participants valued prevention work and community engagement, with calls for equitable fire cover and a holistic approach to community wellbeing.

Priority Two: Deliver a First-Class Emergency Response

- Received the highest level of support, with 99% of respondents strongly agreeing / agreeing.
- Widely viewed as the core mission of GMFRS, with emphasis on equitable response times across all areas.
- Qualitative feedback highlighted the importance of rapid, effective emergency services and the need for tailored resources at each station.

Priority Three: Ensure Service Excellence, Inclusivity, and Sustainability

- While 86% of respondents strongly agreed / agreed, this priority prompted the most varied feedback.
- Some respondents questioned the bundling of themes, while others welcomed the forward-thinking and inclusive direction.
- Staff feedback emphasized the importance of internal development opportunities and clarity around sustainability commitments.

Impacts on the final version

13. Insights from the consultation directly influenced the final version of the Fire Plan , and include:

- The addition of a new priority, increasing the number of these from three to four, to ensure a specific focus on people and culture.
- Commitments were refined to reflect public priorities, particularly around emergency response and ensuring targeted and supportive prevention.
- Language and structure were adjusted to improve clarity, especially within Priority Three.
- Feedback from older residents and underrepresented groups informed inclusivity and accessibility considerations.

- Internal staff contributions shaped commitments around workforce development and operational excellence.

FIRE PLAN 2025-29 - KEY HEADLINES

14. The Fire Plan 2025–2029 sets out GMFRS’s vision to be a modern, flexible, and resilient fire and rescue service. It is structured around four strategic pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Prevent & Protect** – Prevent emergencies by protecting people and places.
- **Pillar 2: Respond** – Deliver an outstanding emergency response.
- **Pillar 3: People & Culture** – Look after our people and foster a culture of equality, inclusivity, and excellent leadership.
- **Pillar 4: Excellence & Value** – Maximise public value through continuous improvement and sustainable use of resources.

15. Each pillar includes a forward plan. These are sets of commitments and measurable outcomes, ensuring the Service remains accountable and responsive to emerging risks and community needs.

16. Below sets out the forward-looking commitments that will guide the Service’s actions and priorities over the next four years. These commitments are designed to ensure GMFRS continues to deliver a modern, flexible, and resilient fire and rescue service that meets the evolving needs of Greater Manchester’s communities.

17. **Pillar 1: Prevent & Protect:** GMFRS will expand and improve its outreach, youth engagement, targeting, and property safety programmes, and play a leading role in building safety reforms, including cladding remediation and enforcement.

Prevent emergencies by protecting people and places

- Collaborate with partners and communities to reduce the risks from fire, water, roads and serious violence.
- Help deliver Greater Manchester’s ‘Live Well’ and Housing First ambitions.
- Collect and analyse information, including from partner agencies and communities, to effectively deliver targeted campaigns, education, and interventions to those most at risk.
- Play a key role in accelerating the remediation of blocks of flats with unsafe cladding.
- Collaborate with partners to ensure the new building safety regime delivers improvements and we are able to identify and respond to emerging risks.
- Provide advice and support to the premises we inspect and regulate, to help ensure our communities are safe in the buildings they live, work in, and visit.
- Robustly enforce fire safety, building safety, and petroleum and explosive regulations to ensure those responsible for protecting the public are complying with their duties.

- Work hard to understand and overcome any limitations to the effectiveness of our engagement with communities.
- Enhance our programmes for young people to help them develop their skills and achieve their aspirations, while supporting the reduction of offending and exposure to risk.
- Harness new digital solutions to drive innovation and efficiency and improve access to advice and information.

18. Pillar 2: Respond: The Service will enhance its operational readiness through risk analysis, new equipment, training, and multi-agency collaboration, including a potential expansion into emergency medical response.

Deliver an outstanding emergency response

- Provide a response to emergencies that is fast, effective, and as safe as possible.
- Analyse current and emerging threats, and implement approaches to reduce the risks to our communities.
- Review our frontline vehicles and equipment to ensure we have the right resources, in the right place, at the right time.
- Ensure our operational training programme is delivered to the highest quality, adapting to new and emerging risks.
- Plan and deliver multi-agency training and exercising to ensure an effective and integrated response to threats.
- Research and invest in state-of-the-art equipment, vehicles, and technology to help keep our firefighters and communities safe.
- Ensure we are resilient and prepared to respond to the increasing threat of incidents caused by the climate emergency.
- Continually improve our operational policies and procedures, ensuring they build on lessons learned, public inquiries, and best practice.
- Enhance the health, fitness and safety of our operational workforce.
- Explore opportunities to provide a wider response to medical emergencies.
- Enhance our 999 Control function to ensure optimal performance and mobilisation of resources.

19. Pillar 3: People & Culture: A continued focus on cultural transformation, leadership development, and workforce diversity will underpin efforts to create an inclusive and high-performing organisation.

Look after our people and foster a culture of equality, inclusivity, and excellent leadership.

- Look after our people and foster a culture of equality, inclusivity, and excellent leadership
- Work to attract, recruit, and retain a workforce that is more representative of the people of Greater Manchester.
- Develop fair and effective pathways into the Service through the MBacc, apprenticeships, T-levels, and our own youth engagement programmes.

- Expand our volunteering offer to provide the maximum value for communities and participants.
- Improve development opportunities for all staff, removing barriers to provide pathways that are inclusive and progressive.
- Drive consistent, inclusive, and inspiring leadership to promote excellence and cultural improvement.
- Enhance our culture of respect, inclusivity, and empowerment, so staff feel supported and valued for the work they do.
- Maximise engagement with staff and representative bodies, with a focus on honesty and ensuring everyone has a voice.
- Strengthen processes to enhance and manage the health and wellbeing of our workforce.

20. **Pillar 4: Excellence & Value:** GMFRS will invest in digital transformation, estate modernisation, and environmental sustainability, while driving efficiencies and exploring income generation opportunities.

Maximise public value through continuous improvement and sustainable use of resources

- Provide transparency and public value for our communities, ensuring people understand and benefit from how we are spending their money.
- Strengthen sustainable and innovative practices that will help reduce our impact on the environment.
- Review our role in helping to prevent the escalation and impacts of the climate emergency.
- Modernise our estate to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflects the needs of our workforce and the public.
- Undertake research and incorporate new technologies, including AI applications, to enhance the way we work and provide greater value.
- Work with building managers to reduce the burden of false alarms and implement robust attendance policies to safely reduce the threat to fire cover.
- Drive excellence and professionalism through organisational learning, research and public participation; develop and implement best practice.
- Evaluate the quality and impact of our services to ensure public value and effectiveness.
- Explore opportunities for income generation to enhance our financial sustainability and invest in the growth of the Service.
- Share our expertise with Government and others to influence decision-making and ensure we have the right resources and legislation to keep our communities safe.

21. The Fire Plan has four intended outcomes and a series of associated key performance indicators (KPIs). The KPIs can be found on page 78 of the Plan. The intended outcomes are:

- Reduce deaths, injuries and damage caused by fire and other threats, and help build stronger communities.

- Ensure people are safer in the buildings they live in, work and visit, and help make businesses more resilient to fire.
- Develop and maintain a diverse, high-performing, and healthy workforce.
- Deliver the best value to the public with the least impact on the environment.

22. The Fire Plan is underpinned by robust governance, scrutiny, and performance monitoring frameworks, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement. Annual Delivery Plans will translate these goals into actionable steps and allow the Service to respond to changing risk, and Annual Delivery Reports will report on progress against these plans, detailing performance and highlighting achievements and community activities.
23. The delivery of the Fire Plan will be scrutinised by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for Safer and Stronger Communities. The Deputy Mayor will hold the Chief Fire Officer to account through the Deputy Mayor's Executive, as well as through weekly one-to-one meetings. Progress against the Plan's delivery will be reported on and published via Annual Delivery Reports. The Police, Fire and Crime Panel will hold the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to account for the delivery of the Plan. Internal assurance will continue to be provided in published annual statements. External assurance will continue to be provided by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

NEXT STEPS

24. In terms of the governance arrangements, the Fire Plan 2025-2029, has been, and will be presented at the following meetings:
- i. Deputy Mayor's Executive Fire – 20th May – for formal endorsement.
 - ii. GMCA – 30th May – for formal endorsement.
 - iii. Police, Fire and Crime Panel – 10th June – for consideration in accordance with article 5B of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Fire and Rescue Functions) Order 2017.
25. Once the Fire Plan has been approved by the Mayor, the launch activities will consist of –
- i. Distribution of the document to stations, with covering letter.
 - ii. Intranet, staff newsletter and Core Brief.
 - iii. Promotion internally on TV screens and AV screens at stations.
 - iv. Press release and social media promotion.
 - v. Publication on our website.
 - vi. Consideration of an official launch event, in line with the Greater Manchester Strategy launch.
 - vii. Consideration of staff engagement events to bring the strategy and subsequent ADP to life for staff.