

Your Reference

Our Reference GW/NWFC

Contact Gwynne Williams  
Tel No: 0161 608 4007 or 07967 018661

**GMCA**

GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY

Fiona Hodson  
Company Secretary  
North West Fire Control  
Lingley Mere Business Park  
Lingley Green Avenue  
Great Sankey  
Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA5 3UZ

Greater Manchester Combined  
Authority  
GMFRS Headquarters  
146 Bolton Road  
Swinton  
Manchester, M27 8US  
Telephone 0161 736 5866  
[www.greatermanchesterfire-ca.gov.uk](http://www.greatermanchesterfire-ca.gov.uk)

10 August 2018

Dear Fiona

### **NWFC Director Appointments**

Thank you for your letter dated 25 July 2018.

This letter responds to your request for a document explaining the rationale for the proposed change in representation.

The need arises out of a fundamental change in fire and rescue governance in Greater Manchester. Fire and rescue functions have since the abolition of the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority on 8 May 2017, been functions of the GMCA, exercisable by the Greater Manchester Mayor.

The GMCA is constituted of a total of 11 members (the 10 Greater Manchester Leaders/Salford City Mayor and the Greater Manchester Mayor).

Whilst the Mayor is able to delegate functions to the Leaders, due to their role in their district Councils and their portfolios within the GMCA, the Leaders simply do not have capacity to undertake fire and rescue functions in addition.

You are of course aware that the Mayor has the ability to appoint a Fire Committee consisting of elected members of the district councils. The Mayor did so in 2017 but the committee was advisory only, with scrutiny being undertaken by a GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Since the Mayor has had responsibility for fire and rescue he has received much feedback both directly and through the publication of the Kerslake Report. As a result he has announced a whole service review of fire and rescue including leadership and culture.

In this context the Mayor considers that there is a need for clear, transparent and accountable leadership and he has resolved to dis-establish the Fire Committee. I trust that the other fire and rescue authority members of NWFC would not seek to gainsay that decision which is a legitimate one for the Mayor to make.

It is now eleven years since the corporation of NWFC and governance models are moving on. There would be a similar consequence if fire and rescue governance were to follow the PCC model. It may be that in the future, the governance of other fire and rescue authorities will change. It would not be acceptable to seek to deny appropriate representation within NWFC in those circumstances either.

In terms of both capacity and capability, this leaves the Mayor with the ability to delegate fire and rescue functions to officers who arguably have greater locus; you will be aware that other than executive members of local authorities, elected councillors are not able individually to exercise delegated powers.

With regard to conflicts of interest, it seems to be implied that these are greater for officers than for members but we would not agree that is the case. Officers of local authorities in Greater Manchester have long held directorships in local authority companies.

The two officers proposed as directors are two of the most senior officers of the GMCA who fully understand the duties of directors to the company. The Treasurer currently sits on the Board of Transport for Greater Manchester. They will not be officer advisers to NWFC, which is where conflicts may more naturally arise.

In terms of who authorised to attend, speak and vote on behalf of GMCA at general meetings of the company, I would suggest that the Articles are amended to provide that the GMCA shall nominate from amongst its appointed directors who is to be its authorised representative and inform the company in writing.

I hope that this now provides the basis on which to move forward.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Gwynne Williams  
Deputy Monitoring Officer