

By email

Dave Russel
Chief Fire Officer
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

25 July 2022

Dear Dave,

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service: Cause of concern follow-up

In June and July 2021, we inspected Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). We identified the following cause of concern during our inspection, which we issued in September 2021:

“Greater Manchester FRS should have its own marauding terrorist attack (MTA) response that is resilient, timely and cost effective.

The service should ensure it is properly prepared as part of a multi-agency response to terrorist incidents. This includes the provision of a timely response to ensure public safety. Response procedures must be understood by all staff and properly exercised and tested. This should not come at the cost of wider fire cover for the public.”

As a result, we made the following recommendation:

“By the end of October 2021, the service should have a sustainable plan to maintain its response to MTA incidents. This should include meaningful training and exercising for all staff who would be expected to respond to an MTA incident.”

On 1 November 2021, you provided us with a comprehensive business case detailing how the service intended to improve the capacity and capability of its response to terrorist incidents, as well as how much it would cost. You described how all operational staff in the service would be trained, equipped and supported to carry out agreed MTA activity in accordance with the MTA joint operating principles.

In our letter of 14 December 2021, we said we were aware of the business case and that it was awaiting political approval and collective agreement. We also acknowledged that on 11 November 2021 you had sent us a detailed action plan for implementing the MTA specialist response capability and its associated governance arrangements.

We noted that you had continued to maintain the capability of the service's MTA specialist response capability by working with the Fire Brigades Union. While we still had concerns over how resilient the MTA specialist response capability would be, it was clear that the service had shown a strong commitment and willingness to address the cause of concern.

We also said that, until the business case had been approved and we had reviewed the governance arrangements and implementation plan, we couldn't determine how effectively these plans would provide for a resilient, fast and cost-effective MTA response. We said we would continue to monitor the progress made by the service and that we would revisit it in spring 2022 to make sure the cause of concern had been addressed.

Action plan

As mentioned above, on 11 November 2021 we received the service's action plan for addressing the cause of concern. The plan includes details about the cause of concern, the actions being taken to resolve it, deadlines for these actions to be completed by and who would be responsible for each action.

Progress made against the cause of concern

In April 2022, the service has signed a collective agreement with the Fire Brigades Union to provide a specialist MTA response capability. We were pleased to see the service had reviewed its policy and standard operating procedures for MTA capability and that it had made sure that all operational staff were aware of them.

The service has also developed a training programme that will be introduced to all operational members of staff. This training programme includes a number of exercises that will be carried out by both the police and ambulance services.

Conclusion

We have been in contact with the service since issuing the cause of concern. On 18 May 2022, we revisited the service and gave you our initial findings. This letter provides an update in that respect.

From these visits, we are satisfied that the service has made progress in relation to the cause of concern we identified. We now consider the cause of concern to be closed.

This letter will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Parr', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

Matt Parr CB

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services