



**Wednesday,
6 July 2016
10.00 am**

**Meeting of
Governance and
Constitution Committee
Fire Service HQ
Winsford**

Contact Officer:
Joanne Smith
Democratic Services

Fire Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2FQ

Tel: 01606 868804
E-mail: joanne.smith@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Cheshire Fire Authority

Notes for Members of the Public

Attendance at Meetings

The Cheshire Fire Authority welcomes and encourages members of the public to be at its meetings and Committees. You are requested to remain quiet whilst the meeting is taking place and to enter and leave the meeting room as quickly and quietly as possible.

All meetings of the Authority are held at Fire Service Headquarters in Winsford. If you plan to attend please report first to the Reception Desk where you will be asked to sign in and will be given a visitors pass. You should return your pass to the Reception Desk when you leave the building. There are some car parking spaces available on site for visitors at the front of the Headquarters Building. Please do not park in spaces reserved for Fire Service personnel.

If you feel there might be particular problems with access to the building or car parking please contact the Reception Desk at Fire Service Headquarters on Winsford (01606) 868700.

Questions by Electors

An elector in the Fire Service area can ask the Chair of the Authority a question if it is sent to the Monitoring Officer at Fire Service HQ to arrive at least five clear working days before the meeting. The contact officer named on the front of the Agenda will be happy to advise you on this procedure.

Access to Information

Copies of the Agenda will be available at the meeting. A copy can also be obtained from the contact officer named on the front of the Agenda. Alternatively, individual reports are available on the Authority's website (www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

The Agenda is usually divided into two parts. Members of the public are allowed to stay for the first part. When the Authority is ready to deal with the second part you will be asked to leave the meeting room, because the business to be discussed will be of a confidential nature, for example, dealing with individual people and contracts.

This agenda is available in large print, Braille, audio CD or in community languages upon request by contacting; Telephone: 01606868414 or email: equalities@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Recording of Meetings

Anyone attending the meeting should be aware the Authority audio-records its meetings. There is a protocol on reporting at meetings which provides further information. Copies are available on the Service's website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk or alternatively contact Democratic Services for details

Fire Evacuation

If the Fire Alarm sounds you should make your way to the nearest exit as quickly as possible and leave the building. Please follow any instructions from staff about evacuation routes.



**MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, 6 JULY 2016**

Time : 10.00 am

Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire

AGENDA

Part 1 - Business to be discussed in public

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1A Recording of Meeting

Members are reminded that this meeting will be audio-recorded.

1B Apologies for Absence

1C Declarations of Members' Interests

Members are reminded that the Members' Code of Conduct requires the disclosure of Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Non-Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

1D Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

(Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on 30th March 2016.
(attached)

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

2 Draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-16

(Pages 5 - 36)

3 Review of Whistleblowing Policy

(Pages 37 - 46)

4 Annual Report - Corporate Compliments and Complaints

(Pages 47 - 60)

5 Summary of Members Attendance June 2015 to May 2016

(Pages 61 - 66)

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MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE held on 30 March 2016 at Fire Service HQ at 1.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillors S Wright (Chair), M Biggin, R Daniels, D Marren, L Morgan, and R Polhill.

Independent members: Mr R Garner, Mr M McBride and Mr W Ravenscroft

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A RECORDING OF MEETING

The Chair reminded Members that the meeting was being audio-recorded.

B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The independent members declared an interest in Item 4 on the agenda – Update on Recruitment of Independent (non-elected) Members and agreed to leave the meeting when this item was discussed.

D MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That

- [1] **the minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on Wednesday 16th December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.**

It was noted that the meeting scheduled for 3rd February 2016 was cancelled.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

2 PREPARATION OF STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2015-16

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications explained that this report reminded Members of the details of the timelines and process for the development and preparation of the Statement of Assurance 2015-16.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications provided some background to the report, explaining that one of the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012) was the publication of an Annual Statement of Assurance which provided assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. He advised that the Statement of Assurance brought this information together into a 'single annual document' which was accessible and easily understood. Additionally, he reminded Members that, in 2013, the Committee had approved a refreshed 'Local Code of Corporate Governance Framework' which provided a simple structure for monitoring compliance and assurance using six principles. He confirmed that the same process had been adopted for monitoring compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework requirements and was presented within the local code as principle seven.

He drew Members attention to the Appendix to the report which detailed Principles 1 – 7 from the local code and confirmed that the process for evaluating and reviewing the principles and providing evidence had commenced and the key steps and timelines for the development and production of the Statement of Assurance 2015-16 were detailed within the report. He explained that, prior to the presentation of the Statement of Assurance 2015-16 to the Closure of Accounts Committee in June 2016, a draft copy could be provided for Members of this Committee for consideration and comment, if Members indicated they wished to receive it.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications concluded by advising Members that following formal sign-off of the Statement of Assurance 2015-16 by the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2016, it would be published on the Service's website as a key document for members of the public to access.

Members queried how often this information was accessed by members of the public via the website. The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed that it was not one of the most frequently accessed page on the website, however the information and links were on occasion used to respond to freedom of information requests.

A member referred to principle 5 of the local code and commented that the high standard of member development provided should be reflected within the evidence detailed for this principle.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the timelines and process for the preparation of the Statement of Assurance be noted; and**
- [2] a copy of the draft Statement of Assurance be received by Members of the Governance and Constitution Committee for consideration and comment before it is presented to the Closure of Accounts Committee in June.**

3 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Head of Finance advised Members that the Authority's Financial Regulations (the Regulations) were reviewed on an annual basis and this report detailed the proposed changes/additions to the Regulations for the Committee's consideration.

The Head of Finance referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which contained a copy of the Regulations with the proposed changes highlighted in red. He summarised the proposed changes as follows:

- Reference to Budget Management Board meetings had been removed as consideration of all significant financial matters now took place as part of the Service Management Team meetings
- Reference to temporary in-year virements which were reported to the Performance and Overview Committee and upon which the Authority's revised budget were based had been included
- Overspending on capital schemes would need approval if it reached 10% of the approved sum or £100k (whichever was the lower) – an increase from 10% / £50k

The Head of Finance reassured Members that the financial position on all capital projects was reported to Performance and Overview Committee on a quarterly basis so Members would be fully aware of any overspends which might occur and how officers were dealing with them. He concluded that the Regulations required a comprehensive refresh to bring them in line with the latest opinions about best practice. Careful consideration was also required in future so that the Regulations reflected the impact of Blue Light Collaboration, as services would be delivered differently. As a consequence a completely refreshed version would need to be considered by this Committee and subsequently approved by the Fire Authority in due course.

A Member queried whether the temporary in-year virement was necessary as any overspend or underspend was reported quarterly to the Performance and Overview Committee and this did not result in an increase in the budgeted expenditure overall. The Head of Finance advised that the reference to temporary in-year virements within the Regulations was intended to make a clear distinction that it was not a permanent virement taking place in year.

Members discussed the increase to 10% or £100k for funding a project which was overspent and agreed that a certain amount of flexibility was required for officers. Reporting of overspends in capital programmes to Members of the Performance and Overview Committee on a quarterly basis was important to provide clarity.

RECOMMENDED: That

- [1] the proposed changes/additions to the Financial Regulations be submitted to the Fire Authority for approval.**

4 UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT (NON-ELECTED) MEMBERS

The independent members left the meeting, following their declaration of an interest in this agenda item.

The Democratic Services Manager introduced this report which provided Members with an update on the recruitment process and proposed timelines in respect of the independent (non-elected) members (IMs) to ensure that appointments were made in time for the annual meeting of the Fire Authority in June 2016.

The Democratic Services Manager referred Members to their previous meeting on 16th December 2015 where it was agreed that a term of office for IMs of 4 years be introduced and the numbers of IMs appointed be reduced from 3 to 2. She explained that following the Committee's decision for a small working group of Committee Members to be set up to progress the recruitment process, the group had met on 29th February and had reviewed the recruitment documents required and agreed timelines for the process.

She drew Members attention to Appendix 1 to the report which included an Independent (non-elected) Member Person Specification which she explained had been discussed by the group. The role involved being a 'critical friend'. Additionally she advised that within the eligibility criteria a requirement had been added in relation to declaring criminal convictions. A Member had also asked that there be a requirement in relation to bankruptcy: 'the applicant must not be disqualified as a company director'. The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that this would be added.

The Democratic Services Manager summarised the other areas discussed by the group which included no change to the remuneration as this would be reviewed as part of the Members Allowance Scheme annually and would be included in the next comprehensive review of allowances which was due to commence in Autumn 2016. She concluded by drawing Members attention to the timelines for the recruitment process to ensure the new appointments took place at the annual meeting of the Fire Authority in June 2016.

A Member noted the progress made at the small working group meeting and agreed that all items discussed were comprehensively reflected within the report presented to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the information contained in the report be noted.

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

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MEETING OF : GOVERNANCE & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE : 6 JULY 2015
REPORT OF : HEAD OF PERFORMANCE, PLANNING AND
COMMUNICATIONS
AUTHOR : CHRIS ASTALL

**SUBJECT: DRAFT ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE
2015-16**

Purpose of Report

1. For Members of the Governance and Constitution Committee to review the draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-16 prior to presentation to the Fire Authority in September 2016. [**Appendix 1 – Statement of Assurance**].

Recommended that:

- [1] Members review and approve the draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-16 for presentation to the Fire Authority in September 2016.

Background

2. Members may be aware that one of the requirements of the *Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012)* is the publication of an Annual Statement of Assurance that:

'must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in this [Fire and Rescue National] Framework.'

3. In May 2013 the Government produced 'light touch' guidance detailing what could be included in the Statement of Assurance. While the guidance acknowledged the contents for the Statement of Assurance may already exist within other published documents, the purpose was to bring the information together into a single annual assurance document which would be easily understood and accessible.
4. In November 2013 the Governance and Constitution Committee were presented with, and approved an improved 'Local Code of Corporate Governance Framework'. This framework provides a simple structure for

monitoring compliance and providing assurance under the six principles of the Code of Corporate Governance and the same process was adopted for monitoring compliance with National Framework requirements. This is presented in the local framework as principle 7.

5. Action plans are in place covering any identified areas of improvement and progress against actions is reported to Governance and Constitution Committee twice yearly. A full review of the evidence and assurance statements highlighted in the Local Code of Corporate Governance framework has been recently undertaken with the principle owners.
[Appendix 2 – Summary of Local Code of Corporate Governance Framework Principles1-7].
6. The Statement of Assurance is intended to act as a ‘signpost’ document directing the reader to more detailed information which is published on the Service’s website or other related linked sites.

Information

The Compliance Process

7. The Authority currently fulfils its financial and governance assurance requirements through the process to produce and validate the Annual Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which include associated controls, scrutiny, and audits. The Authority also produces an Annual Report which summarises some of these issues, includes progress against its plans and is distributed to all homes in its area.
8. The Service’s Corporate Programme Office oversees the frameworks and ensures evidence is consistently captured, owned, monitored and is readily accessible from one place, avoiding duplication.
9. The format of the Statement of Assurance document has been considered by our internal auditors Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) who have confirmed that it remains fit for purpose.
10. The preparation and timelines for drafting the Statement of Assurance 2015-16 were presented to Constitution and Governance Committee in March 2016.
11. In the interests of transparency, the Statement and all compliance and assurance documentation and other relevant links and signposts will be accessible directly from the Service’s website as part of the Statement of Accounts process in September.

Financial Implications

12. There are no significant financial implications other than staff time involved in research, evidence gathering and publication. The AGS section of the Statement was presented to Closure of Accounts Committee in June prior to its inclusion in the Annual Statement of Accounts.

Legal Implications

13. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012) sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities and introduces additional requirements concerned with governance in its broadest sense. This includes a requirement to publish an annual Statement of Assurance.

Equality & Diversity Implications

14. There are no differential impacts on any particular section of the community arising from this report. Any issues relating to the publication and communication of the publication have been considered as part of the full equality impact assessment carried out on the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

Environmental Implications

15. There are no specific impacts on the environment arising from this report.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – draft Statement of Assurance 15-16
Appendix 2 – summary of Local Code of Corporate Governance Framework
Principles 1-7

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Annual Statement of Assurance 2015 - 2016

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Financial Assurance	4
3. Annual Governance Statement.....	5
4. Operational Assurance	13
5. Assurance Conclusion.....	17

DRAFT

1. Introduction

This is Cheshire Fire & Rescue Authority's fourth annual Statement of Assurance in line with the Government's requirements set out in the *Fire and Rescue National Framework* for England.

Intended Purpose of Statement of Assurance

The aim of the Statement of Assurance is to provide an easy and accessible way in which communities, government, local authorities and partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.

Statements of Assurance are published annually by fire and rescue authorities to integrate where practicable with existing governance reporting arrangements.

Complying with the Statement of Assurance

The published Statement of Assurance guidance sets out compliance requirements under three broad headings :

Financial:

Cheshire Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority has a robust budget monitoring process that is subject to close scrutiny. The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that the right controls are in place to ensure that financial assets are properly managed, financial reporting is accurate and that the Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with statutory requirements.

[Financial Regulations](#)

[Statement of Accounts](#)

Governance:

The Authority is required to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority is required by law to produce an "Annual Governance Statement" (AGS). The AGS and supporting compliance evidence can be located in section 3 of this document.

Operational:

The Authority is required to comply with a range of laws, regulations and guidance, the following is a list of some of the key legislation:

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

[Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)

[Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)

[Localism Act 2011](#)

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#)

[Local Government Act 1999](#)

[Health & Safety & Work Act 1974](#)

To ensure that the Authority can demonstrate how it complies with these requirements, a number of detailed assessments are undertaken. These include:

- Health and Safety policy and framework with regular progress being presented to the Service Management Team (SMT).

- Operational capability against risk to ensure that the right resources, procedures and skills are available to professionally respond to communities within target response times with resources aligned to risk.
- An annual review of operational risk and performance supplemented by quarterly scrutiny Member and officer meetings.
- Risk Management Board monitoring and scrutiny of corporate risks.
- Compliance with National Framework requirements.

[Operational Assurance Guidance Principle 7](#)

Accountable to our Communities

This statement is underpinned by detailed documented evidence, most of which has been made available to the public on the Service website. This includes incident and performance data, quarterly performance reports, policy decisions, audit and assurance reports. Agendas, minutes and supporting reports relating to Cheshire Fire Authority's meetings are all published on the website.

www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

The Authority measures and monitors performance using a range of key Performance Indicators (KPI's) that are also used to compare performance against other fire and rescue authorities in England. The Authority publishes an Annual Report in September each year summarising progress against plans and a range of other performance measures which is sent to all homes in its area. All performance information available to the public can be accessed via the Service website and continues to be reviewed and refined.

[Annual Report](#)

In addition, the Authority has adopted the best practice guidance set out in the [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#) as far as is practical.

2. Financial Assurance

Evidence Links

The Cheshire Fire Authority provides financial assurance through the publication of an Annual Statement of Accounts. This is a statutory requirement under the [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) and the accounts are prepared following the *CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting*. The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors as directed by the [Audit Commission Act 1998](#).

[Statement of Accounts](#)

In addition to the statutory requirement to publish annual financial results, the Authority is committed to increasing transparency. One of the first steps in this process is for the publication of expenditure in excess of £500. This is compliant with Local Government Transparency Code.

[CFRS Website: What we spend](#)

External Audit:

Grant Thornton Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) is the appointed external auditor for Cheshire Fire Authority and is responsible for completion of the following assurance activities:

- Audit of the 2015-16 financial statements
- Opinion on the Authority's accounts
- Value for Money conclusion

Internal Audit:

The Internal Audit function for 2015 - 16 was provided by Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) and their audit opinion for the year ending March 2016 can be located in Section 3 of this document.

3. Annual Governance Statement

What is the Annual Governance Statement?

An Annual Governance Statement (AGS) publicly explains how an organisation manages its governance and internal control measures. It is an open and honest account of how an organisation ensures its financial management system is adequate and effective, as well as ensuring it has a sound system of internal control, assuring utmost integrity in all its dealings.

[Delivering Good Governance](#)

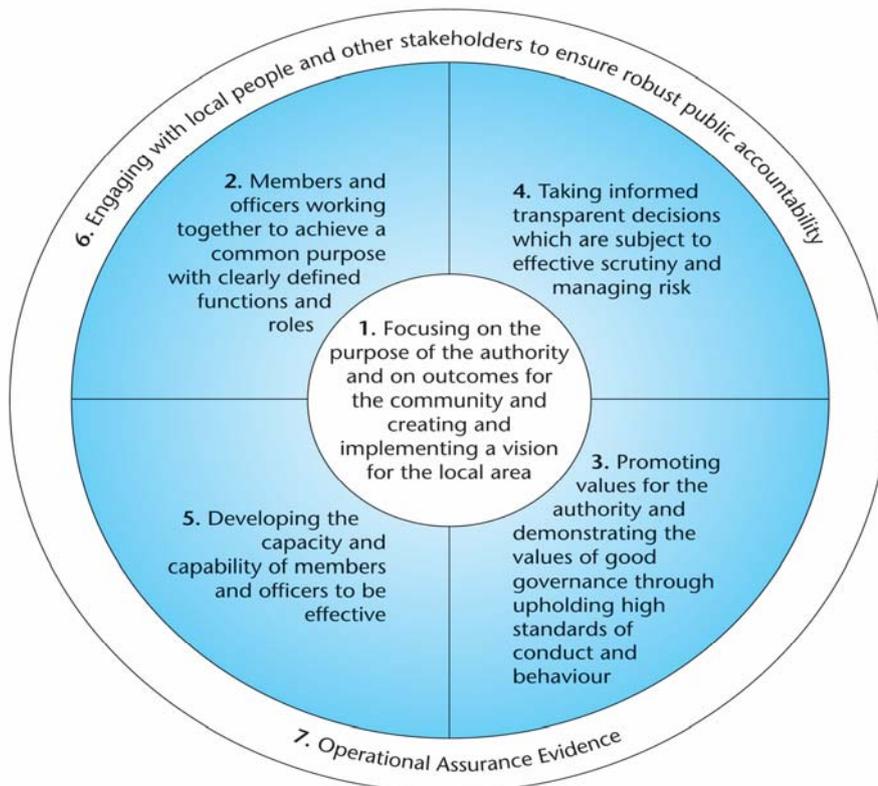
What is the governance framework?

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) published the advisory framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' ('the framework'), in 2007 and an Addendum to the framework was published in December 2012.

The framework defines six core principles that underpin the governance of each local government body. These principles were used to inform the development of the Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance which was refreshed and approved by the Authority in 2013. The seventh principle in the model requires evidence of operational assurance and compliance with the National Framework. The Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance and compliance evidence is published on the Authority's website. An outline of the seven key areas is set out in the following model (access the links to compliance documentation for more detail):

[Local Code of Corporate Governance Principals 1-7](#)

[Governance Summary Guidance](#)



Scope of Responsibility

Cheshire Fire Authority

The Authority has responsibility for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Authority has a duty under the [Local Government Act 1999](#) to show how it aims for continuous improvement and best value in delivering its services, taking into account a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Members and Officers

In discharging the statutory responsibilities of the Authority, Members and Senior Officers are responsible for ensuring that proper governance arrangements are in place. These need to demonstrate good management of the Authority's key risks in accordance with legislation and proper standards.

The Authority's Governance and Internal Control Framework

The Authority's local governance and internal control framework includes the systems, processes, procedures, culture and core values by which it is directed and controlled, and through which it accounts to and engages with the communities and other stakeholders. It includes arrangements to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate and value for money services.

This framework centres on the Authority's strategic aims and objectives and includes:

- The organisation's vision and purpose which drive the service planning, delivery, risk, project and performance management frameworks
- The annual Integrated Risk Management Plan
- Consultation and Communications Strategies
- A published set of core values
- The Authority Constitution
- Responsible Financial and Monitoring Officers
- Established structure of Authority and Committee meetings, each with formal Terms of Reference (ToR)
- Scrutiny by Members e.g. Performance and Overview Committee responsible for thematic agendas such as Finance, Risk, Equality and Diversity, Performance Management, Health and Safety
- Integrated Corporate and Financial planning processes with regular reporting
- Treasury Management Strategy
- A refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan reviewed by the Governance and Constitution Committee.
- Policies which govern the activities of the Authority, overseen by the internal Policy Approval Group (PAG)
- Risk Management Board responsible for maintaining and championing an effective Risk Management Policy, framework and Corporate Risk Register
- Published Anti-Fraud, Corruption, Whistle-blowing and Complaints policies and procedures
- Medium term financial forecasting and budget management processes.

[CFRS Vision, Mission, Core values](#)

[IRMP](#)

[Treasury Management Strategy](#)

[Whistle-blowing Policy](#)

- Performance Management Group which is responsible for monitoring and reviewing organisational performance including the Corporate Performance Scorecard setting out the Authority's key indicators
- A dynamic, intelligent training programme which is tailored to the development needs of the Authority's frontline staff
- Appraisal and personal development programmes
- IRMP Programme Board which monitors and challenges performance of key programmes and projects
- Established Health and Safety policies
- Partnership Steering Group
- ICT Steering Group which provides strategic direction for the Authority's ICT and Information Management and Security policies
- SMT/Budget Management Board (BMB) considering all financial issues
- Information Governance
- Code of Conduct
- Crisis Management Plan

Engaging with our Communities

Extensive efforts are made to engage with the communities and stakeholders of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington. A comprehensive twelve week programme of community consultation and stakeholder engagement is carried out each year to seek feedback on the Authority's key priorities and proposals set out in its draft annual Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). IRMP 12 covered the period ending **31st March 2016**.

[IRMP](#)

The principles by which the Authority carries out consultation are set out in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and on key issues the Authority works with the Consultation Institute to assess its performance against best practice.

Identifying and Communicating the Authority's vision

Following a period of public consultation the Fire Authority formally approved the publication of the new Five Year Strategy "Planning for a Safer Cheshire" at its meeting 17th June 2015. The Authority's vision remains "A Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires or other emergencies" and the Strategy sets out the approach to achieving that vision in the context of the challenges and risks faced by the organisation.

[Five Year Strategy](#)

Risk Management:

The Risk Management Framework and Policy is reviewed by Risk Management Board (RMB) annually. In 2015 there was a full refresh of the framework resulting in the policy and the practitioner's guidance being produced as two separate documents. The Corporate Programme Office (CPO) worked closely with RW Training who agreed to be our 'critical friend' and reviewed both documents for compliance/best practice. The following feedback was received from RW Training:

'A full review of both the policy/strategy and practitioner documents has been completed and a few areas for improvement have been identified, both documents are really well written, very understandable and comprehensive'

Risk Management Board accepted the new Framework at the October meeting and the policy and framework was approved by the Policy Committee December 2015. The framework ensures all strategic, service plans, programme and project risks are

assessed against the achievement of objectives. RMB review the strategic risk register regularly.

Equality and Inclusion

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has been using the Fire and Rescue Equality Framework to assess its equality performance since its launch six years ago, it has proved to be an invaluable tool. The Authority achieved the highest level of the equality framework 'Excellent' in 2011 and is looking for reaccreditation in 2016/17. Evidence is currently being compiled and the Authority is working hard to secure an 'Excellent' rating.

[Equality and diversity](#)

Stonewall

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service has once again been praised by the leading LGBT charity Stonewall. The Authority has been a Diversity Champion since 2009 and has featured in the top 50 of Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index Top 100 for the last four years. In 2016 the Authority ranked 13th and was the highest placed of any of the emergency services in the UK.

[Stonewall Top Employers 2016](#)

The Environment

The Authority has an ambitious carbon reduction target of 40% by 2020. Significant progress has been made over the last year and to date the Authority has achieved a carbon reduction of 1071 tonnes. A major HQ boiler replacement programme has proved particularly successful in reducing carbon emissions and generating income through the Government's incentive programmes. Successful grant applications have enabled the leasing of a fleet of electric vehicles and the installation of charging points at key fire stations. The pilot project will continue during 2016-17 to assess the viability of a longer term commitment by the Authority to the use of electric vehicles in its fleet.

[Environmental Strategy 2014 - 2020](#)

Working in Partnership



In 2013 the Authority was appointed the lead agency for a sub-regional Community Safety Transformation Programme "Transforming Community Safety (TCS). This Programme involved a collaboration of **Cheshire Probation Trust, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS)** and the **four Local Authorities** in Cheshire, Warrington and Halton. The programme which ended in March 2016 achieved its objective of implementing a 'Do it Once' approach to community safety resulting in consistency of practice across a number of areas.

The TCS programme's work to join up residents most likely to be affected by community safety issues with those characterised as 'troubled families' resulted in a bid for a programme to tackle Complex Dependencies (CD). This secured a £5 million Transformation Challenge Award from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Programme began in April 2015 and has a core team based at North West Fire Control in Warrington, including dedicated staff from CFRS. The Authority has agreed to part fund three fire service posts to work in each of the integrated front door teams, which are to be located in each local authority area, building on the model already in place in Cheshire West and Chester.

A number of the priority work streams which featured within the TCS Programme will continue to progress during 2016-17 as part of the Complex Dependency (CD) programme and this will enable work on Domestic Abuse and Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) to progress in a way that will go beyond original ambitions of the TCS programme.

National Campaigns

Smoke Alarm Campaign

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) played a leading role in a three year campaign to achieve Government commitment to bring in new safety legislation making it compulsory for all landlords to fit smoke alarms on every floor of a rented property. In 2015 the Authority saw the successful culmination of the campaign when Parliament approved the new legislation and CFRS played a leading role in marketing and promoting the new requirements to both private landlords and their tenants.

North West Fire Control (NWFC)

The North West Fire Control Project facilitates a unique collaboration between four partner fire and rescue services Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire and Greater Manchester. Over the past year the Authority has continued to work closely with NWFC and the partners to resolve issues and, where possible, devise collaborative solutions. Quarterly statistical performance data is sent from NWFC to each FRS for scrutiny by the Authority and by Members of the Performance & Overview Committee.

Blue Light Collaboration Programme (BLC)

The aim of this programme is to ensure that the three emergency services responsible for protecting the communities of Cheshire have a shared commitment to improving the safety of our residents. Cheshire is currently safer than it has ever been but maintaining those improvements while also making major savings to cope with cuts in central funding is a significant challenge. The programme sets out to ensure that through working together more closely and sharing some resources and premises real efficiencies can be achieved as well as delivering a more joined-up service to local communities.

During 2015-16 a specific programme team was established and a detailed work plan developed with the ultimate aim of the Authority moving from its current Headquarters to share accommodation and facilities at the Constabulary's nearby Headquarters in Winsford by April 2018. The move is designed to make efficiencies by combining common systems and processes and the majority of support service areas.

At its meeting on 9th December the Fire Authority approved more detailed preparation work on the Blue Light Collaboration Programme to go ahead. Work will continue in 2016-17 on ensuring the correct governance is in place to deliver both the programme vision and the effective future management of the services required by the organisation.

Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company Limited (FRIC)

FRIC has been set up by nine Authorities. The Authorities work in partnership and FRIC administers claims and arranges certain insurances. The arrangement helps to inform the Authority's risk management activities.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

Cheshire Fire Authority has a responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control, at least annually. This is informed by the assurances of senior officers within the Authority, who have responsibility for the development, maintenance and management of the governance and internal control arrangements.

Cheshire Fire Authority is made up of twenty-three elected Members appointed by the constituent Authorities. There are also non-elected independent members who act in an advisory role and do not vote.

The Authority operates with the following main Committee structure:

- Policy Committee
- Performance and Overview Committee
- Governance and Constitution Committee
- Brigade Managers Pay and Performance Committee

Terms of Reference for each Committee are subject to regular review.

The Authority has a Health Safety & Welfare Committee which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

[Health Safety and Welfare](#)

Member Champions

Member Champions are assigned to a number of thematic areas to provide additional scrutiny and challenge; these include risk, equality, ICT, young people, older people and the environment.

The Service Management Structure

The operations of the Authority are directed through a clear management structure with defined roles and responsibilities. The Policy Approval Group (PAG) comprises of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Head of Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) and Head of Finance, Section (151 Officer). For the majority of 2015-16 the Authority also had an Assistant Chief Fire Office role which was removed in February 2016 as part of a senior management restructure.

The full Service Management Team (SMT) is made up of PAG and Heads of Department. SMT is responsible for delivering the aims and objectives that focus on the achievement of the Cheshire Fire Authority's vision. This includes the key priorities which reflect community, regional and national issues.

Monitoring Officer:

During the 2015 – 2016 financial year the Head of Legal and Democratic Services fulfilled the statutory role of Monitoring Officer for the Authority, ensuring all actions taken were lawful.

Chief Finance Officer:

For the financial year 2015 – 2016 the Head of Finance had responsibility for day to day financial management in accordance with CIPFA guidance and responsibilities set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

How we performed during 2015 – 2016 - Performance Management:

As part of the corporate planning process the Authority sets out the key corporate performance indicators which measure the delivery of its strategic objectives and provide key business intelligence to help target prevention and protection activities. Targets are set where appropriate to ensure continuous improvement and evaluation. Achievements against these indicators are scrutinised quarterly by the Performance and Overview Committee and Performance Management Group and annually by the Fire Authority.

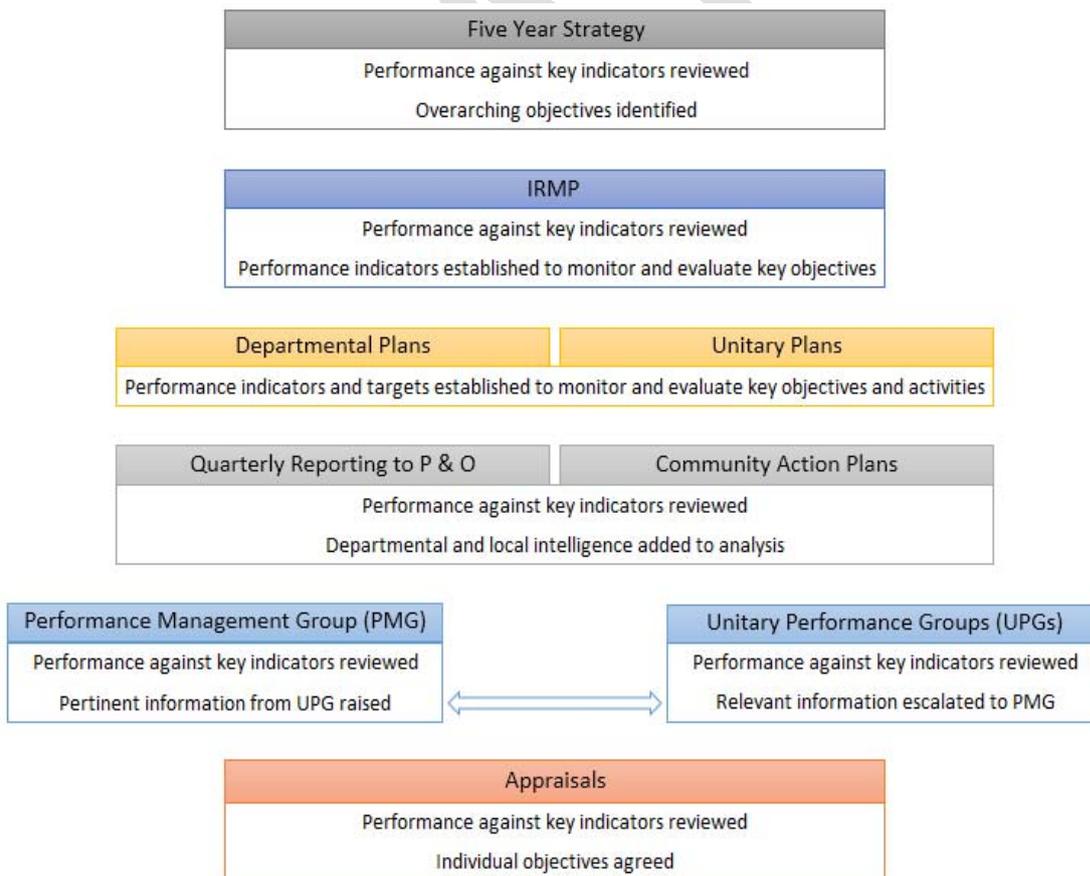
[Corporate Scorecard 15-16](#)

Performance relating to the handling of calls by North West Fire Control is also monitored quarterly, in line with agreed standards.

The Annual Report sets out how the Authority has performed over the last 12 months.

The diagram below presents the CFRS performance reporting model in place for 2015-16:

[Annual Report](#)



Monitoring and Reporting:

The Authority has an approved process of quarterly performance and financial monitoring and reporting highlighting progress against projects and activities, budget and performance indicators identified within Departmental, Unitary and Community Action Plans. These reports are presented to Members of the Authority in line with a corporate reporting cycle.

Value for Money Reviews:

The Authority's previous four year strategy committed to carrying out departmental reviews across the organisation; 2013-14 was the last year of the three year cycle and focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided. The underpinning principle of the reviews was the Authority's duty to make best use of its resources in improving the quality of life for its communities. A full evaluation of the programme was undertaken in 2015 with the key findings reported to Performance & Overview Committee. The report confirmed expected savings in the region of £1.3m by the end of 2015-16.

During 2015-16 the first phase of the new organisational review programme was launched with an initial target of delivering a further £1 million in savings. That initial phase produced savings of approximately £800,000 which were removed for the 2016-17 budget.

Key Governance Improvements made during 2015-16:

In last year's AGS the Authority set out a number of improvements it intended to implement during the year. Progress against implementation of these actions is presented to the Governance and Constitution Committee.

The table below summaries progress made to date:

Key Improvement Area	Update Position
There are a number of key policies scheduled for review during 2015-16	Continue during 2016-17
Full review of the Risk Management Policy & Framework will be undertaken in 2015	Complete
Re map of partnerships to clearly determine what is a partnership and what is an arrangement	Work ongoing during 2016-17 with the introduction of a Partnership toolkit which is currently in development and will provide descriptions of partnerships/collaborations.
Obtain Annual Statement of Assurance of NWFC Governance arrangements for 2014-15	Complete

Statement of Assurance 2015 - 16

The following table summarises the improvements identified during the process for 2015-16 by the relevant Governance Principal Owners:

Improvements Identified for 15-16	Lead Department
Policy Management - continue to facilitate comprehensive review of all corporate policies due for review	Legal & Democratic Service/Planning Performance & Communications
Review of Performance Management Framework	Planning Performance & Communications

Internal Audit:

The Authority's Internal Audit function for 2015-16 was outsourced to Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), and established protocols were put in place for working with External Audit. A risk-based internal audit plan and three year strategy was agreed with senior management and approved by the Authority in 2015. A number of audits were commissioned in line with our risk profile which provided an independent assurance level on the Authority's control frameworks.

The internal audit team completed a number of compliance and assurance audits during 2015-16 aligned to the approved internal audit plan, which have generally resulted in positive opinions with a small number of recommendations made as a result of their findings. Action Plans have been put in place to resolve the issues and deliver solutions.

Internal Audit Opinion 2015-16:

In accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Director of Internal Audit is required to provide an annual opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's system of internal control.

The purpose of this Director of Internal Audit Opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Accountable Officer and the Authority which underpin their own assessment of the effectiveness of the organisation's system of internal control. This Opinion will assist the Authority in the completion of its Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

Director of Internal Audit Opinion:

Significant Assurance, can be given that there is a generally sound system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives, and that controls are being applied consistently. However, some weaknesses in the design or inconsistent application of controls may put the achievement of particular objectives at risk

[Director of Audit's Opinion and Annual Report \(2014/15\)](#)

All recommendations for improvements identified by Internal Audit are populated on the Authority's Cheshire Planning System for monitoring and tracking delivery of actions.

External Audit Opinion:

External Audit Opinion will be provided September 2016.

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4. Operational Assurance

Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and Rescue Authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. Links to some of the key legislation/guidance can be accessed below:

- [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)
- [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#)
- [Local Government Act 1999](#)
- [Health & Safety At Work Act 1974](#)

Corporate Planning - Integrated Risk Management Planning for Safer Communities

During 2015/16 Cheshire Fire Authority published a new five year strategy, titled 'Planning For A Safer Cheshire 2015-2020'. The strategy clarifies some of the stark choices facing the Authority and outlines the approach and principles adopted to ensure the Authority does not compromise on its commitment to protecting local communities, reducing risk and maintaining firefighters' safety.

[Five Year Strategy](#)

[IRMP](#)

Community Risk Management

Through its Community Risk Management Policy the Service provides risk, intelligence and performance analysis in order to ensure that strategic, tactical and operational activities are evidence-led and fully evaluated. This is achieved by using specialist systems, software, data and skills delivered by the Service's Business Intelligence team.

[CRM Policy](#)

Unitary Area Plans

In addition to and complementing the IRMP, Unitary Area plans are developed for each council area. Each plan is unique to that area and contains the actions the Unitary teams will take in order to reduce risk and improve community safety. These plans are informed by the Community Risk Model which brings together historic incident data, demographic, commercial and external risk factors.

[CE Unitary Area Plan 14 15](#)
[CWAC Unitary Area Plan 14 15](#)
[Halton Unitary Area Plan 14 15](#)
[Warrington Unitary Area Plan 14 15](#)

Stakeholder Engagement

The Authority is committed to the involvement of stakeholders in the development of the plans and it encourages this by carrying out a structured consultation programme on its draft IRMP each year. Local communities, partners, staff, representative bodies and other stakeholders are invited to comment to ensure that before any decision is taken all perspectives are taken into account. To enable active and informed participation, data and information relevant to the plan is made available to the public on the Service's website, in consultation packs that are distributed at community roadshow events across Cheshire, and also at key local stakeholder meetings.

Prevention and Protection Assurance

Prevention and Protection managers have an Audit and Assurance function for the Prevention and Protection aspects of the Service. Specific areas of activity aligned to providing assurance against these elements of service delivery include:

- Compliance with the Prevention team's Quality Assurance Framework.
- Compliance with BS EN ISO 9001 - the provision of the Service's Prevention & Protection services (including fire safety enforcement, fire investigation, business safety, unwanted fire signal and arson reduction initiatives, home fire safety, road safety, youth and community cohesion activities) has been assessed and accredited to BS EN ISO 9001:2008
- Compliance with the Matrix standard – the Service's provision of the Prince's Trust Team Programme has been assessed and is accredited to the Matrix international quality standard for organisations that deliver information advice and/or guidance.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – further detail on how we discharge our responsibilities under fire safety legislation can be accessed via our website.
- Customer surveys are undertaken as part of the Audit and Home Safety Assessment processes.

[Fire Safety advice for Businesses](#)

Performance Management – How we performed during 2015-16

A suite of corporate indicators and targets are used to support the Authority and enable Stakeholders to scrutinise delivery of the IRMP.

[Corporate Scorecard 15-16](#)

The Authority publishes all performance and incident data on its website along with the Annual Performance Report to both drive improvement and ensure transparency of its performance. Performance Management is driven through three-tiers of quarterly meetings, Performance & Overview Committee (P&O) chaired by a Member of the Fire Authority, Performance Management Group (PMG) chaired by the DCFO and Unitary Performance Groups in each of the four unitary areas chaired by the Service Delivery Managers.

www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

[Annual Report](#)

External Assurance - Operational Peer Assessment

The Authority welcomed the Operational Peer Challenge team to Cheshire in July 2012. The team carried out a general health check and review of leadership, capacity and governance, as well as an assessment of a number of key organisational areas. Responsibility for Fire & Rescue Services formally moved from DCLG to the Home Office in early 2016. The Home Office are looking at options for Fire & Rescue Services to be subjected to more formal assessments and inspections and the Authority is keen to take part in any pilot inspection exercises in 2016-17.

[Operational Peer Challenge](#)

Operational debriefs

Operational debriefs are used at both incidents and the Authority's exercises and form part of the quality control system ensuring effectiveness of core activities. These debriefs provide valuable lessons learned which contribute to improving the service provided.

They are undertaken following every incident and at a level which recognises the scale of the incident and also the involvement of other partner agencies. Debriefs

will therefore fall into Level 1 Hot debriefs or more in-depth Level II Structured debriefs.

Multi agency incidents will also prompt a multi agency debrief which will be facilitated and reported through the Cheshire Resilience Forum with learning outcomes reviewed and managed through the affiliated Cheshire Emergency Response Collaboration (CERC) group.

Section 28 notifications – formerly known as Rule 43 Notices

In accordance with its commitment to ensure a safe and competent workforce, the Authority reviews policies, procedures and training programmes as a result of guidance issued by Coroners.

Business Continuity – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Business Continuity is an important part of the Authority's strategy and a robust programme is well established to ensure responsibilities align to best practice standards, e.g. BS25999-2. Departmental plans which support the Authority's Crisis Management Plan are maintained and tested regularly. The Crisis Management Plan is owned by the Risk Management Board and reviewed and approved annually.

During 2014-15 there were a number of national strikes by the Fire Brigades Union, therefore the plan has undergone 'live testing'. Crisis Management Team meetings have been carried out prior to, and after the strikes to plan, prepare and capture any lessons learned. These then inform the Crisis Management Plan.

Business Continuity planning and operational resilience were also tested and proved to be fit for purpose during the recent major incident at Bosley which required a sustained local and regional operational presence over an extended period of time.

Interoperability, Resilience and Safety

A comprehensive range of risk intelligence data and information is taken into account as part of the risk identification and analysis process underpinning the IRMP. This includes Community Risk Registers, with the Authority having a leading role in the Cheshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which focuses on interoperability and joint planning with other emergency services using the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability (JESIP) principles.

LRF structures, policies and practices were reviewed and amended in 2013 to better reflect the changing make up of partner agencies. Governance is managed through a monthly meeting cycle of the Management Group which reports twice yearly to the LRF Executive Group.

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow mutual assistance arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring Services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. Cheshire Fire Authority has in place contractual agreements with the following bordering Fire Authorities for response to life risk incidents:

- Merseyside
- Staffordshire
- Shropshire

- Derbyshire
- Greater Manchester
- North Wales

The creation of the North West Fire Control has also led to agreement between the four FRSs (Greater Manchester, Cumbria, Lancashire & Cheshire) on an additional set of mobilising and charging rules which allow for mobilisation and support to a wider range of Over the Border (OTB) incident types.

Health and safety

The Authority seeks to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in managing its health and safety (H&S) duties.

The Authority has a H&S management system based on Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance. As part of this it has clearly defined management responsibilities; as far as reasonably practicable we assess and manage the risks arising from our activities, we consult our employees on matters affecting H&S, we provide training and information to our employees, we report and investigate all accidents with the intention of preventing a recurrence and have in place arrangements to respond to any emergency that occurs at work.

As part of the H&S Management System there are annual audits of the health and safety arrangements. An audit and inspection policy is in place which includes:

- Quarterly workplace inspections
- Three themed audits scheduled annually and undertaken by the Health and Safety team
- Three year external Peer Review of the H&S management system and themed performance indicators based on Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents Quality Safety Audit (ROSPA) (QSA)

These audits and inspections inform our annual review of H&S Policy and performance. They also contribute towards an annual H&S report submitted to the Authority Performance and Overview Committee.

Firefighter Fitness

The Authority has had a policy to ensure fitness of its operational staff for some time; in December 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) approved an addendum to the National Framework for England in relation to firefighter fitness. Also in 2014 the Chief Fire Officers Firefit Steering Group published the results of research it had commissioned into an appropriate national fitness standard for Firefighters.

In early 2015 the Authority proposed amendments to its then current fitness policy to align it to the National Framework requirements and those of CFOA national guidance on firefighter fitness. This amended document was approved in March 2015 and adopted in June 2015 following consultation with the Health and Safety Committee.

The Authority has recruited a fulltime Fitness Advisor to lead on supporting firefighters to attain and maintain the fitness standards required, and to undertake fitness testing. Fitness testing for all operational staff takes place annually.

[Annual Health and Safety Report 2015](#)

[Firefighter Fitness Addendum](#)

[Firefighter Fitness Policy](#)

As part of an assurance audit the Authority asked the auditors to look at the compliance with the National Framework requirements on management of firefighter fitness. The report concluded that the Authority complied with requirements.

Operational Training

The operational training strategy was formally launched in 2012. This strategy is underpinned by a number of specialist training policies and together these deliver a competence training framework covering a three year training cycle.

All new firefighters attend basic training which is broken down into modules and each module is assessed. As the newly appointed firefighter enters their development phase of their career they are enrolled and registered with the awarding body Edexcel on to a level three National Vocational Qualification Diploma, Operations in the Community. Assessed by competent qualified vocational assessors the firefighters meet the assessment criteria of National Occupational Standards and achieve competence within three years.

[Operational Training Strategy](#)

All front line operational staff, inclusive of new starters also attend refresher training. Breathing apparatus refresher training, which takes place in dedicated 'hot fire' conditions is scheduled annually and the Authority ensures that 100% of all eligible staff attend.

Compartment fire behaviour training capability is refreshed every two years and a joint venture with Manchester Airport Fire Service and Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service commenced in June 2013 whereby all three services use training facilities at the airport to train and assess gas cooling and backdraft awareness skills, knowledge and understanding. This collaboration is proving to be successful and effective and has underpinned the Authority's operational capability to deal safely and competently with severe compartment scenarios. Once again the Authority ensures 100% of all eligible staff attend.

Road traffic extrication techniques, trauma care, hazardous materials, swift water rescue and working safely at height skills are refreshed over a three year period. The Authority ensures that a third attend each year with a target set to achieve 100% of all eligible staff attendance after three years.

To enhance the teaching and training capability of the instructional staff, all have now achieved or are in the process of achieving the level three award in education and training.

The Operational Training Group (OTG) also manages the Authority's Accredited Centre; currently Edexcel and Skills for Justice are the awarding bodies. Visits by external standards verifiers annually assess and confirm that the Authority operates to and maintains the awarding standards and this assists OTG in quality assuring its planning, delivery and review of training.

As well as external verification OTG also review all operational training delivery against its policies and annual training plan to assess its effectiveness and to ensure that the requisite number of operational personnel have attended these continuous professional development programmes.

Managers are all trained and assessed for their skills, knowledge and understanding in Incident Command. A dedicated Command Training Group (CTG) of vocationally qualified Officers plan, deliver and assess these training programmes. The quality of the Incident Command Training within the Service has attracted business from

several other Fire & Rescue Services including Cumbria, Shropshire and Nottinghamshire as well as several high risk industries.

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5. Assurance Conclusion

This Statement of Assurance provides an accurate account of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Financial (and associated documentation), Governance and Operational Assurance arrangements to 31st March 2016. In addition we are satisfied that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority conducted its business practices within the appropriate legal framework and standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Signatures:

Fire Authority (Chair):

Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive Officer:

Treasurer:

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PRINCIPLE 1: Focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the Community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.	
1.1	<p>Exercising strategic leadership and clearly communicating the Authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and promote the authority's purpose and vision ▪ Review on a regular basis the authority's vision for the local area and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements ▪ Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners. ▪ Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance
1.2	<p>Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available. ▪ Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service
1.3	<p>Ensuring that the authority makes best use of resources and taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively ▪ Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions
PRINCIPLE 2: Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions.	
2.1	<p>Exercising effective leadership throughout the authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions and of the roles and responsibilities of the scrutiny function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members and individually and the authority's approach towards putting this into practice ▪ Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other authority members, members generally and of senior officers
2.2	<p>Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between authority Members and officers and that the responsibilities of Members and officers are carried out to a high standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the authority, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required ▪ Make a chief executive or equivalent responsible and accountable for all aspects of operational management ▪ Develop protocols to ensure that the leader and chief executive negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities is maintained ▪ Make a senior officer (the S151 officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control ▪ Make a senior officer (usually the monitoring officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and

	regulations are complied with
2.3	<p>Ensuring relationships between the authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop protocols to ensure effective communications between members and officers in their respective roles ▪ Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective remuneration panel (if applicable) ▪ Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery ▪ Ensure that the organisation’s vision, strategic plans, priorities and targets are developed through robust mechanisms, and in consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders, and that they are clearly articulated and disseminated. ▪ When working in partnership, ensure that members are clear about their roles and responsibilities both individually and collectively and in relation to the partnership and to the authority ▪ When working in partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that there is clarity about the legal status of the partnership - Ensure that representatives of organisations both understand and make clear to all other partners the extent of their authority to bind their organisation to partner decisions.
<p>PRINCIPLE 3: Promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour</p>	
3.1	<p>Ensuring authority members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that the authority’s leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect. ▪ Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of members and staff, of work between members and staff and between the authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols. ▪ Put in place arrangements to ensure that members and employees of the authority are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.
3.2	<p>Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the organisation and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with members, staff, the community and partners. ▪ Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice. ▪ Develop and maintain an effective standards committee. ▪ Use the organisation’s shared values to act as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the authority. ▪ In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision making and actions can be judged. Such values must be demonstrated by partners’ behaviour both individually and collectively

PRINCIPLE 4: Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk	
4.1	<p>Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the authority’s performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible ▪ Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based ▪ Put in place arrangements to safeguard members and employees against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice ▪ Develop and maintain an effective audit committee (or equivalent) which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a committee ▪ Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints
4.2	<p>Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that those making decisions whether for the authority or the partnership are provided with information that is fit for the purpose – relevant, timely and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications ▪ Ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making and used appropriately
4.3	<p>Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the authority, with members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their jobs ▪ Ensure that effective arrangements for whistle-blowing are in place to which officers, staff and all those contracting with or appointed by the authority have access
4.4	<p>Using their legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in their area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on them by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine but also strive to utilise their powers to full benefit for their communities ▪ Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on authorities by public law ▪ Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon them, as well as the requirements of general law, and in particular to integrate the key principles of good administrative law – rationality, legality and natural justice – into their procedures and decision making processes
PRINCIPLE 5: Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective	
5.1	<p>Making sure that members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide induction programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for members and officer to update their knowledge on a regular basis ▪ Ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the authority

5.2	<p>Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance as individuals and as a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess the skills required by members and officers and make a commitment to develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively ▪ Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed
5.3	<p>Encouraging new talent for membership of the authority so that best use can be made of individual's skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the authority ▪ Ensure that career structures are in place for members and officers to encourage participation and development
<p>PRINCIPLE 6: Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability</p>	
6.1	<p>Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make clear to themselves, all staff and the community to whom they are accountable and for what ▪ Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the authority is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required. ▪ Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function
6.2	<p>Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the authority, in partnership or by commissioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively ▪ Hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality ▪ Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the authority to engage with all sections of the community effectively; these arrangements should recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands ▪ Establish a clear policy on the types of issues they will meaningfully consult on or engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result ▪ On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the authority's vision, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period ▪ Ensure that the authority as a whole is open and accessible to the community, service users and its staff and ensure that it has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances when it is proper and appropriate to do so
6.3	<p>Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meet responsibility to staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making

<p>PRINCIPLE 7: COMPLIANCE TO NATIONAL FRAMEWORK 2012</p> <p>The priorities in the National Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face; make provision for prevention and protection activities; and respond to incidents appropriately. ▪ work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service. ▪ be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
<p>Fire and Rescue Authorities must:</p>
<p>Produce an integrated risk management plan that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border multi-authority and/or national nature.</p>
<p>Work with communities to identify and protect them from risk and to prevent incidents from occurring.</p>
<p>Each fire and rescue authority integrated risk management plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk ▪ Set out its management strategy and risk based programme for enforcing the provision of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.
<p>Make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents and emergencies within their area and other areas in line with mutual aid agreements.</p>
<p>Have effective business continuity arrangements in place in accordance with duties under Civil Contingencies Act 2004.</p>
<p>Collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver interoperability. Interoperability between fire and rescue authorities includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compatible communications systems, control rooms and equipment • Common command and compatible control and co-ordination arrangements • Effective information, intelligence and data sharing • Compatible operational procedures, and guidance with common terminology • Compatible training and exercising (both individually and collectively) • Cross border working with other English fire and rescue authorities and those in devolved administrations
<p>Collaborate with other FRAs, other emergency services, wider Category 1&2 responders and Local Resilience Forums to ensure interoperability.</p>
<p>Engage with the fire and rescue strategic resilience board in order to support discussions and decision making.</p>
<p>Fire and rescue authorities risk assessments must include an analysis of any gaps between existing capability and national resilience.</p>
<p>Fire and rescue authorities must highlight to the department or the Fire and Rescue strategic resilience board, any capability gaps that cannot be met having taken into account mutual aid arrangements, pooling and reconfiguration of resources and collective action.</p>
<p>Fire and Rescue strategic resilience board, to provide assurance to Government that risks are assessed, plans are in place and any gaps between existing capability and national resilience are identified and fit for purpose and any new capabilities commissioned to deliver by Government are procured, maintained and managed cost effectively.</p>
<p>Work in partnership with communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally in order to meet the requirements of the framework.</p>
<p>Each fire and rescue authority integrated risk management plan must; be accessible and publicly available; reflect effect consultation throughout development; cover at least a three year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as necessary; reflect up to date risk analysis and evaluation.</p>
<p>Hold the CFO to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service.</p>

Have arrangements in place to ensure that decisions are open to scrutiny.
Make communities aware of how they can access data and information on their performance.
Publish an annual statement of assurance.
<p>Fire and rescue authorities must work collectively, with the Strategic Resilience Board, to provide assurance to Government that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ risks are assessed, plans are in place and any gaps between existing capability and that needed to ensure national resilience are identified. ▪ Existing specialist national resilience capabilities are fit for purpose ▪ Any new capabilities that fire and rescue authorities are commissioned to deliver by Government are procured, maintained and managed in the most cost effective way that delivers value for money whilst ensuring fit for purpose
<p>Each Fire & Rescue Authority must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ have a process of fitness assessment and development to ensure that operational personnel are enabled to maintain the standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely. ▪ ensure that no individual will automatically face dismissal if they fall below the standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely. ▪ ensure that all operational personnel will be provided with support to maintain their levels of fitness for the duration of their career. ▪ consider where operational personnel have fallen below the fitness standards required whether an individual is able to continue on full operational duties or should be stood down, taking into account the advice provided by the authority's occupational health provider. In making this decision, the safety and well-being of the individual will be the key issue. ▪ commit to providing a minimum of 6 months of development and support to enable individuals who have fallen below the required fitness standards to regain the necessary levels of fitness. ▪ refer an individual to occupational health where underlying medical reasons are identified that restrict/prevent someone from achieving the necessary fitness and that individual must receive the necessary support to facilitate a return to operational duties; and ▪ fully explore opportunities to enable the individual to remain in employment including through reasonable adjustment and redeployment in role where it appears the medical condition does not allow a return to operational duties.

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE : 6th JULY 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR : ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT : REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING

Purpose of Report

1. To note the current position.

Recommended That:

- [1] The content of the report be noted; and
- [2] A further report be presented to the next meeting of this Committee when the current Whistleblowing Policy has been further reviewed and updated.

Background

2. "Whistleblowing" is the term used to describe the raising of a concern by a worker who considers that there has been wrongdoing or malpractice by his employer or fellow workers and where it is in the public interest to do so.
3. The legislation, initially introduced in 1998, is designed to reduce malpractice in organisations and to ensure individuals can report malpractice without fear of reprisals. Provided they satisfy certain conditions in the way they report the wrongdoing, workers are protected from dismissal or detriment.
4. The intention is not only to reassure workers that it is safe and acceptable to make disclosures internally but also to make it more likely that employers will be forewarned of any malpractice or wrongdoing and be given the opportunity to take steps to deal with the problem. Such procedures should act as a deterrent to malpractice, encourage openness, form part of other risk management measures and help to protect the reputation of the organisation and senior management. In the absence of safe mechanisms for raising concerns internally, whistleblowers are more likely to go straight to the press or some other outside body to complain.
5. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 introduced specific rights for workers who disclose information about an alleged wrongdoing in defined circumstances. Its core purpose was to encourage disclosures to be made internally and to protect workers from reprisals after raising a

concern. Despite the title of the Act it was not until 2013, when amendments were made to the legislation, that it became necessary for the disclosure to be “in the public interest”. Prior to this, disclosures had to be made “in good faith” to afford the worker the relevant protections.

Information

The Authority’s policy and procedure on Whistleblowing

6. The Authority’s Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure (attached as an appendix) can be found in the Code of Conduct for Employees.
7. It was last reviewed in 2014 when changes were made to reflect the recommendations made in a report produced by Public Concern at Work, the leading whistleblowing charity.
8. Since then the Employee Handbook for Support Staff has been updated to include a section on Whistleblowing and this is given to all new starters and is covered in induction sessions.
9. It is also included in the Annual Statement of Assurance and the local Code of Corporate Governance, which are reviewed each year.
10. The Government has issued further Guidance for Employers and a Code of Practice, and the current Policy will now be further reviewed and updated where necessary.

Whistleblowing Complaints

11. The Authority has not received any complaints under the Whistleblowing Procedure since the last report to this committee in 2014.

Financial Implications

12. There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

13. The policy and procedure ensure compliance with the legislation and may help to mitigate risks to the Authority’s reputation.

Equality & Diversity Implications

14. The policy and procedure minimise the risk of reprisals against those raising concerns and allow possible concerns about discriminatory practices to be raised internally and dealt with appropriately without recourse to litigation.

Environmental Implications

15. There are no environmental implications.

EXTRACT FROM CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

SECTION 2

CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure (Confidential Reporting)

Introduction

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service values its employees and the services they provide to the people of Cheshire. We are working hard to improve the services we deliver and we need our employees, partners and contractors to tell us when anything is not working well or when people are not behaving properly.

As a public service organisation, the Fire Authority will use public funds prudently and apply the highest standards of conduct throughout the organisation. This procedure encourages all employees to help maintain these standards, by enabling you to draw attention, within the Fire Authority, to any concerns which you may have. Public disclosure may well be justified at some point, but this should not happen before the Service has had the opportunity to investigate the concern. Premature or unnecessary publicity may impede proper investigations or harm individuals.

Within this Authority the Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

The Law

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, as amended, sets out a framework for a worker to make disclosures about certain categories of wrongdoing, provided they reasonably believe it to be in the public interest to do so.

The disclosure will be protected if it is made to the employer or to a “prescribed person”. There is a statutory list of “prescribed persons”, produced by the Secretary of State, together with the types of matters to be reported to them.

It is unlawful for an employer to dismiss or subject a worker to a detriment for having made a “protected disclosure”.

What can I report?

You should report any concerns that you have about the conduct of our employees, elected Members, or contractors that may affect the services we provide or the good name of the Fire Service.

Examples of concerns that may be raised under the procedure are:-

Criminal offence,
Failure to comply with a legal obligation,
Unauthorised use of money,
Fraud and corruption,
Bullying or abuse of employees or service users,
Breaches of Service policies including health and safety issues,
Any neglect of duty,
Miscarriages of justice,
Damage to the environment,
Sexual or physical abuse,
Other unethical conduct,
Information tending to show any of the above has been or is likely to be concealed.

The Fire Service considers that normal management channels are sufficiently open and effective for most concerns to be raised that way. But this will not always be appropriate, or possible, and that is why this procedure has been created. It offers the means to raise concerns you may have about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of staff or elected Members, or other people acting on behalf of the Service. A concern may arise, for example, from worries about failure to observe standards, Standing Orders, procedures, or policies being circumvented, or improper conduct.

The procedure does not cover concerns that are covered by other procedures. For example, an employment problem may well be covered by the Grievance Procedure or Dignity at Work procedure. If you are in doubt as to which is the appropriate procedure, you should consult your Line Manager or HR Business Partner.

Confidentiality

The best way to raise a concern is to do so openly. Openness makes it easier for the Service to assess the issue, work out how to investigate the matter and obtain more information.

Your concern will be treated in strict confidence and everything done to keep your identity secret if this is what you request, unless the Authority is required by law to disclose this. However, you may have to be a witness at some point if matters are taken further, following investigations. It might then not be possible to keep your identity fully secret.

Anonymous Allegations

An anonymous concern is likely to carry much less weight than one which is signed; the investigating manager would have to decide whether or not to accept it. This decision would depend on the seriousness of the issue, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation in other ways. Signed concerns are always better.

Raising a Concern - Who to Approach

When deciding who it would be best to approach, take into account the type of matter, its seriousness and its sensitivity, and who may be involved. Some examples are given:-

- The manager for your department/watch or their manager [example - for a local service delivery concern]
- The Head of your Department or another Head of Department [example - for a service delivery concern within the wider department];
- Internal Audit or the Head of Finance [example - for a concern about financial probity];
- The Monitoring Officer [example – for a concern which has Service wide implications or needs to be raised with someone independent of your work area].
- Safecall – Independent confidential reporting line [example – concerns about fraud, theft, damage to equipment, harassment/bullying, or concerns involving your managers].
- The Monitoring Officer if your concern is in relation to an elected Member.

How to Raise your Concern

If you raise your concern via the freephone helpline your concern will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures agreed between Safecall and the Authority.

If you raise your concern other than via the freephone helpline, you can do this orally [i.e. face to face or over the phone], or in writing. If you write, mark the envelope “personal and confidential” and send to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager. Whichever way you choose, please give as much information as you can. Remember also to give your name, job and where you work and say if you do not want to be contacted at work [if so, give your home address and phone number].

The following headings should help you organise your thoughts, but you do not have to follow them exactly:

- Why you are concerned and the background information

- Any other procedures, which you have already used, and what happened
- The people who are involved and where they work
- Dates or periods of time
- The names and jobs of any other people who will [or may] support your concern

The earlier a concern is raised the better. Whilst you will not be expected to prove that allegations are true, you will need to show that you have a reasonable basis for your concern and that you believe it to be in the public interest to raise it.

You may want to discuss the matter with one or two colleagues first. Their support could be helpful. There is nothing to stop two or more of you putting your names to a concern.

Involvement of your Trade Union or Professional Association

You may ask your trade union or professional association to raise a matter on your behalf. In this case, if you wish, you can remain anonymous when the concern is first raised. But you may have to be involved personally if the matter goes further.

You may also have your trade union, professional association or a friend at any meeting or interview.

Help with the Procedure

Any of the following will help you to understand the procedure:

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager
The Monitoring Officer
The manager for your department/watch
A HR Business Partner
Head of Finance
A trade union representative
Equality and Diversity Officer

How your Concern will be dealt with

As a start the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager will identify the appropriate manager and initial discrete enquiries will be to decide whether an investigation is needed and if so, how it should be carried out. This will help protect everyone concerned. The overriding principle will be the public interest.

It may be necessary to involve other agencies, for example the police or the external auditors. It may be possible, of course, to sort out the concern without a detailed investigation.

What you will be told

Within ten working days of your concern being received, the manager who carried out the initial enquiries will write to you confirming:

- How and by whom the concern has been handled
- What initial enquiries have been made
- How long any further action may take [as far as this can be known]
- What further work is planned and how you may be involved

Updates will be provided to the employee who has registered the concern at regular intervals throughout any investigation.

The amount of contact you have with the people considering the matter will depend on many things. These include the type of concern, the potential difficulties of investigating it and the availability of information. You may need to provide more help.

Wherever possible, you will be told the final outcome of the investigation.

Personal Support

The Service will do all it can to minimise any difficulties which you may have because you have mentioned your concern.

As far as possible, you will be offered personal support and this will be arranged by a HR Business Partner. For example, if you had to give evidence in disciplinary or criminal proceedings, full advice about the procedure would be given to you.

Reprisals

You may be put off raising a concern because you are worried about reprisals. If you raise a concern and reasonably believe it to be in the public interest to do so, you should have nothing to fear. You will be doing your duty to the Fire Authority and the public.

The Authority will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and you should not suffer any detriment because you have “blown the whistle”. This means any disadvantage including, for example, a failure to be promoted or a denial of a training opportunity. The Authority will do all it can to protect you.

If you believe that you are suffering a detriment for having raised the concern you should report this.

Anyone who subjects you to any detriment because you have raised a concern may be disciplined. Furthermore, if you happen to be involved in any disciplinary

or other procedures, these will be kept quite separate from the investigation or any matter you raise under this procedure.

You will not be penalised in any way where you make an allegation which you reasonably believe to be in the public interest which is not confirmed after it has been investigated. A concern which is raised frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain may result in disciplinary action.

If you are not satisfied with the Service`s Response

This procedure is meant to give everyone an effective way to raise a concern within the Service and if possible, to resolve it internally. You should not feel that you have to take an issue outside the Service to get satisfaction.

If you are still unhappy after using the procedure and getting a final response you are entitled to consider taking your concern elsewhere. These are some contacts which are available:

- The Service`s external auditors
- A relevant professional or regulatory body [see the last page for contact details]
- Your trade union
- A relevant voluntary organisation
- A Citizens Advice Bureau
- The Police

There is a statutory list of “prescribed persons” with the types of matters to be reported to them. For example the Health and Safety Executive for health and safety concerns. This list can be found in Schedule 1 of the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order SI 2014/2418.

If you raise the matter outside the Fire Authority, you must take into account the rules about disclosing confidential information.

Contact Details

Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
Winsford, Cheshire
Tel: [01606] 868456

Head of Finance
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
Winsford, Cheshire
Tel: [01606] 868484

External Auditors Audit Commission
In Chester Tel: (01244) 602521
The Heath Business Technical Park
Runcorn
Cheshire WA7 4QF
Tel: [01928] 523550

Head of People and Development,
Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
Winsford, Cheshire
Tel: [01606] 868666

Safecall
Independent Advisors
Tel: [0800 9151571]

You can obtain the Constitution, which includes contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Scheme of Delegation on the Intranet under Democratic Services.

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CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE : 6 JULY 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR : JOANNE SMITH

SUBJECT : COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS -
ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with information about Compliments and Complaints about the Service made during the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.

Recommended That:

- [1] the information regarding Compliments and Complaints made during the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 be noted.

Background

2. New procedures were introduced in January 2010 with a separate record kept of those complaints resolved at initial contact. From 2010 onwards three categories have been measured: formal complaints, informal complaints (previously comments) and compliments. The reporting period was also re-aligned to the reporting periods for other Service information such as financial and performance data reporting i.e. from 1st April to 31st March. Data from previous years was also re-aligned to provide historical context.
3. Since 2010 the Compliments and Complaints Procedure has been reviewed on a regular basis to identify any further improvements with the next review scheduled in 2016. There has been a rise in compliments and complaints received through social media and this area will be the main focus of the next review as it is often difficult to identify the sender and follow up.

Information

4. The Compliments and Complaints Procedure has a two-tier approach to complaints. The Service aims to resolve all complaints received at initial contact classifying them as informal. If the initial response does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, the complainant is asked to submit a formal complaint. This approach is detailed on the Service's website and also in the Compliments and Complaints leaflet available at all stations and in the reception at Headquarters.

Statistics for 1st April 2015 to March 2016

5. The statistics for 2015-16 are:
- i. Formal Complaints - 0
 - ii. Informal Complaints - 28
 - iii. Compliments - 82.

Performance Comparison

6. Comparison of the overall numbers is a crude indicator because of the relatively low numbers. The comparison figures for the past five reporting periods are presented below:

	2015-16	2014 - 15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Formal complaints	0	1	2	1	5
Informal complaints	28	38	42	38	44
Compliments	82	86	98	48	52

7. As can be seen from the table the number of complaints received over the last 5 years has been relatively static. However it appears that there is a downward trend in the number of informal complaints received. No matters were escalated into formal complaints last year (2015-16).
8. Performance on compliments was also static until 2013-14, with this period being greatly affected by the Service's appearance on -the television programme 'Sing While you Work'. Although there has been a slight decrease since then the figures remain significantly higher than those recorded prior to 2013-14.
9. Appendix 1 of this report provides brief details of the informal complaints received and whether they have been dealt with within the timescales set out in the Service's procedures. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the Compliments received. The following observations can be made:-
- (a) The complaints cover a range of issues with the vast majority being resolved quickly and on occasion resulting from a misunderstanding. The nature of complaints received can be categorised as follows:
- Driving of CFRS appliances/vehicles (8 recorded)
 - Home Safety Assessments and enquiries (4 recorded)
 - Press Releases/Communications (3 recorded)
 - Alleged conduct of CFRS employees (2 recorded)
 - Content of Fire Safety Talks (2 recorded)

- (b) Most compliments received relate to the Service's departments that have direct interaction with members of the public with the highest number of compliments (33 recorded) resulting from the actions of the Service's fire crews at incidents. Other areas include:

- Working with the Community (16 recorded)
- Animal Rescue (6 recorded)
- HSA Visits (6 recorded)
- Protection Enforcement Work (4 recorded)

Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

11. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality & Diversity Implications

12. There are no Equality & Diversity implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

13. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD

TEL [01606] 868804

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Informal Complaints recorded

Appendix 2 – Compliments recorded

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APPENDIX 1: INFORMAL COMPLAINTS 2015 - 16

Unique Ref	Date of Complaint	How was the complaint received	Relevant Department	Comment	Response within target timescale (Y/N)	Brief Note of Action Taken	Date Closed
CMT 01.15	03.04.15	Email	Prevention and Protection	Complaint re fire standards at a proposed gypsy and traveller site at Cledford Hall.	Yes	Responses sent to complainant to explain that the Local Authority had responsibility for the design approval and licensing of sites. Following further correspondence to the CFO the Service responded that it remained of the view that the layout of the site complied with the appropriate guidance and therefore was not able to comment further.	12.10.2015
CMT 02.15	21.04.2015	Telephone	Service Delivery	Complaint re driving of a fire appliance deemed as being driven without due care and attention.	Yes	Complainant contacted but was not satisfied with initial response. He was provided with the details of how to make a formal complaint, but he did not wish to pursue this.	03.07.2015
CMT 03.15	09.04.2015	Email	Service Delivery	Complaint regarding a RTC incident and the restriction of access to the scene.	Yes	Officer met with complainant and discussed the firefighters actions. He was satisfied with the response received and did not wish to pursue the matter any further following the explanation given in relation to firefighters powers in an emergency to restrict access to the scene of an incident.	27.04.2015
CMT 04.15	13.05.2015	Telephone	Service Delivery	Complaint about the service referring the complainant to another partner agency following attendance at an incident at her household.	Yes	Service Delivery Manager sent a letter explaining the reason for the referral and no further correspondence was received.	30.09.2015
CMT 05.15	20.05.2015	Email	Service Delivery	Complaint about fire service vehicle parked on the verge outside address in Chester.	Yes	Officer replied to complainant to explain that he had investigated the incident and had reminded staff to follow the correct parking procedure in the future.	03.07.2015
CMT 06.15	21.05.2015	Email	Prevention and Protection	Complaint about the unreliability of the ten year battery life smoke alarms.	Yes	Officer replied to explain the national procurement process, feedback given to the supplier and changes that have been made to the products.	08.07.2015
CMT 07.15	15.06.2015	Twitter	Service Delivery	Complaint regarding the driving of a Service vehicle.	Yes	Station Manager raised issue with relevant personnel and this was confirmed to the complainant. No further correspondence received.	29.09.2015
CMT 08.15	24.06.2015	Website	Prevention and Protection	Complaint regarding initial call handling during a request for a HSA.	Yes	Officer contacted complainant to explain that he would review the content of the call and make arrangements for a HSA. Complainant was satisfied with the response.	26.06.2015

Unique Ref	Date of Complaint	How was the complaint received	Relevant Department	Comment	Response within target timescale (Y/N)	Brief Note of Action Taken	Date Closed
CMT 09.15	06.07.2015	Website	Prevention and Protection	Complaint from parent following talk by fire service at her daughter's school which had left her daughter very distressed.	Yes	Lead Advocate telephoned complainant and explained content of talk provided at her daughter's primary school educating KS2 children in fire safety. No further correspondence received.	30.09.2015
CMT 10.15	17.07.2015	Email	Operational Policy and Assurance	Complaint about a vehicle travelling too fast.	Yes	Officer contacted complainant to explain that the vehicle was a driver training vehicle, practising higher speeds in response to an incident but not using blue lights as this was a training exercise.	29.09.2015
CMT 11.15	23.07.2015	Email	Principal Officers	Complaint in respect of press conferences during the Bosley incident.	Yes	The Head of Planning Performance and Communications provided a response.	29.07.2015
CMT 12.15	30.07.2015	Email	Service Delivery	Complaint about firefighters not being made available to attend a fun day despite the local crew previously agreeing to attend the event.	Yes	SM agreed that the crew could attend the event in light of additional information and reassurances from the organiser.	31.07.2015
CMT 13.15	06.08.2015	Email	Operational Policy and Assurance	Complaint regarding a service vehicle driver throwing a lit cigarette butt out of the window.	Yes	Officer e-mailed complainant and assured her that there would be an investigation into the incident. No further correspondence received.	29.09.2015
CMT 14.15	10.08.2015	Email	Comms	Complaint about the communication with residents following a fire on the M56.	Yes	The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications replied via email to explain that the Communications to residents was led by the Police. However he agreed to raise the issues at the multi agency debrief.	29.09.2015
CMT 15.15	20.08.2015	Telephone	Comms	Complaint re name and address information being released to the press.	Yes	Senior Communications Officer responded and apologised. The press release was removed from the website.	17.9.2015
CMT 16.15	29.09.2015	Website	Prevention and Protection	Complainant had received a cold call from a fire safety officer and suggested it would be appropriate to send a letter first as she lives on her own in a rural location and so refused the officer entry.	Yes	Officer responded to the complainant advising them of the current practices of officers carrying out home safety assessments in the community. No further response received.	26.01.2016

Unique Ref	Date of Complaint	How was the complaint received	Relevant Department	Comment	Response within target timescale (Y/N)	Brief Note of Action Taken	Date Closed
CMT 17.15	01.10.2015	Twitter / Facebook	Service Delivery	Complaint regarding the behaviour and language of fire crew when accessing water near her house in the middle of the night in response to an incident nearby.	Yes	Station Manager responded explaining reasons for the crews re-filling the fire appliance near her house and the incident they had attended. He apologised for the noise and confirmed that he had discussed this with the crews involved. The complainant responded giving her reasons for complaining and thanked the officer for his reply.	12.10.2015
CMT 18.15	19.11.2015	Website	Prevention and Protection	Complaint regarding school Education Team visit to his daughters school in Wilmslow, child was asked to go through a mock smoke filled tent, this caused her distress and nightmares.	Yes	Head of Prevention sent email response to complainant explaining our current Key stage 2 Escape to Safety educational package. He offered one of our specialist teams to speak to the complainant's daughter. Complainant responded and matter resolved.	25.11.2015
CMT 19.15	25.11.2015	Telephone	Prevention and Protection	Complaint received from a lady who alleged she was verbally abused and intimidated by a male driver of a CFRS vehicle.	Yes	Head of Prevention telephoned complainant explaining that an investigation had taken place and the member of staff had been identified. The complainant was satisfied with the response and did not wish to take the matter further	30.11.2015
CMT 20.15	19.12.2015	Website	Human Resources	Complaint forwarded to HR to follow the relevant internal process.	n/a	Human Resources dealt with the complaint.	n/a
CMT 21.15	28.12.2015	Website	NWFC	Complaint re lack of response by fire service when called emergency line 999 for help with flooding at a property.	Yes	Investigated with NWFC to understand call history and reason for non response to incident. Response sent to complainant.	25.04.2016
CMT 22.15	13.01.2016	Twitter / Facebook	Service Delivery	Comment posted on twitter: Driver of CFRS vehicle on mobile phone whilst driving.	n/a	Email address requested to enable a response to be sent to the complainant. No further communication received.	25.04.2016
CMT 23.15	09.02.2016	Website	Human Resources/ Finance	Querying non-release of information by CFRS in relation to pension ruling.	Yes	Email response sent out on 15/2 with explanation regarding release of information by CFRS.	27.04.2016
CMT 24.15	15.02.2016	Telephone	Service Delivery	Complaint regarding fire appliances travelling too fast and without due care and attention.	Yes	Station Manager contacted the complainant regarding the incident and complainant was satisfied with the response.	18.02.2016

Unique Ref	Date of Complaint	How was the complaint received	Relevant Department	Comment	Response within target timescale (Y/N)	Brief Note of Action Taken	Date Closed
CMT 25.15	15.02.2016	Website	Service Delivery	Complaint regarding sirens going off at 2am in the morning.	Yes	Following an investigation the Station Manager emailed the complainant to explain the occasions when sirens may be used. Complainant responded that they were satisfied with the response and understood the reasons provided.	23.02.2016
CMT 26.15	25.02.2016	Telephone	Prevention and Protection	Dispute with neighbour regarding use of wood burner.	Yes	Station Manager telephoned complainant following visit to property. Complainant dissatisfied with response provided and wished to raise a formal complaint, however, no further correspondence received.	25.04.2016
CMT 27.15	29.02.2016	Letter	CFRS	Complaint received regarding the flying of the LGBT Rainbow flag at Knutsford Fire Station.	n/a	No contact details to provide response.	25.04.2016
CMT 28.15	02.03.2016	Visit	n/a	Complaint regarding the way a fire service vehicle was being driven.	n/a	Officers identified that this vehicle is not a Cheshire Fire vehicle. Unable to contact complainant as no contact details available.	25.04.2016

APPENDIX 2 COMPLIMENTS 2015-16

Unique Ref	Date Compliment received	How was the compliment received	Compliment	Relevant Department
Compliment 01.15	01.04.15	Website	I just wanted to thank the fireman that attended St Claire's school today and waved and flashed their lights at my son; it made his day.	Service Delivery
Compliment 02.15	02.04.15	Website	Thank you to the crew who attended a house fire in Warrington. We are very grateful. Thank you does not do justice to the great work you do.	Service Delivery
Compliment 03.15	08.04.2015	Website	A big thank you to Cheshire Fire & Rescue who came and fitted smoke alarms to my property today. Brilliant work guys, Cheers	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 04.15	03.04.2015	Letter	Thank you for sending a crew to my home to replace my smoke alarm which had ceased to function.	Service Delivery
Compliment 05.15	16.04.2015	Email	I just wanted to say a big thank you to the Princes Trust Team. The Graduation evening was fantastic and I really got some insight into how the Prince's Trust can change the lives of some young people.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 06.15	17.04.2015	Email	Feedback in relation to the fire at Mr Smiths - 'Thank you for the great work with all the videos and updates regarding the fire, your team have been a brilliant help'.	Planning, Performance and Communications
Compliment 07.15	23.04.2015	Website	Can't thank you enough for saving our house yesterday on Chester Rd Ellesmere Port. Amazing team kept me calm when pregnant.	Service Delivery
Compliment 08.15	28.04.2015	Email	Six Cheshire Firefighters and dog in Nepal feedback received - Just wanted to wish them well and congratulate the fire and rescue for this initiative	Service Delivery
Compliment 09.15	28.04.2015	Email	Thank you to the crews that attended the RTC on the M56 when our granddaughter was trapped in a minibus. Date of incident 6.3.15 not 6.2.15 as stated in the letter.	Service Delivery
Compliment 10.15	04.05.2015	Email	I would like to thank the two lots of fire crew that came to put the fire out on my shed and fence panels due to arson, and also the operator on the phone	Service Delivery
Compliment 11.15	04.05.2015	Email	Feedback following animal rescue - Just wanted to say a huge thank you to you and your teams for saving Elmo yesterday very very much appreciated.	Service Delivery
Compliment 12.15	05.05.2015	Email	Feedback received following talk to Holmes Chapel Ladies Probus Club: Thank you so much for your interesting talk, I have received good feedback and we certainly appreciated all the good advice on protecting ourselves and our homes.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 13.15	11.05.2015	Website	Feedback received following kitchen fire in Crewe: Thank you to Cheshire Fire for coming so quickly, you were efficient and reassuring and my house isn't too damaged.	Service Delivery
Compliment 14.15	11.05.2015	Website	Just wanted to say thankyou for helping my daughter out of a child's swing its very much appreciated.	Service Delivery
Compliment 15.15	15.05.2015	Website	Thank you to the firefighters who looked after our neighbours last night. (Firefighters extinguished a fire involving the front porch of a house in Widnes).	Service Delivery
Compliment 16.15	18.05.2015	Website	Feedback re Emergency Services Joint Open Day: Thank you for organising such a fantastic event. Everyone was so welcoming and accommodating and it was brilliant to remind everyone what a thoroughly amazing job you all do, the public is so fortunate to have such brilliant people and services available in times of need.	CFRS
Compliment 17.15	19.05.2015	Website	Thank you to the firefighter at Warrington who helped me out today. A ring had to be cut off my finger. Everyone should know that our firefighters do so much more.	Service Delivery
Compliment 18.15	30.05.2015	Website	Feedback about fire in Widnes on 29th May: 'Excellent coverage of incident thank you so much'.	Service Delivery
Compliment 19.15	26.05.2015	Email	Thank you to Birchwood Crew who attended a HMP Risley 50th anniversary celebrations. 'They were friendly, approachable great with children and really are a credit not only to the station but to the service as a whole'	Service Delivery

Compliment 20.15	27.05.2015	Email	Thank you for the excellent educational visit that my group from France made to your fire station. It was definitely one of the highlights of the trip. My colleagues and I were impressed by the professionalism of your team of fire fighters.	Service Delivery
Compliment 21.15	04.06.2015	Letter	Thank you for your assistance in this case, your evidence was crucial in bringing it to justice and your contribution is greatly appreciated.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 22.15	06.06.2015	Email	I just wanted to say I had a lovely time with my mum and niece at the Chester Fire Station open day, it was great. I was hit by a car a few weeks before just by fire station and I was talking to a firefighter who asked how I was. I would just like to thank him.	Service Delivery
Compliment 23.15	12.06.2015	Email	I would like to thank the professional service and speed of Warrington and Runcorn fire services in ensuring my family were safe after our summerhouse out building caught on fire. The teams were clear on what they needed and the information from the chief fire officer was clear and concise. These guys deserve a great deal of praise and reward for the risks they take.	Service Delivery
Compliment 24.15	12.06.2015	Email	Feedback re cat rescue in a tree: Thank you for you and your team as always the professionalism and compassion shown by the fire and service towards animal welfare was outstanding.	Service Delivery
Compliment 25.15	12.05.2015	Email	Feedback re Arson conviction: The victim is over the moon and has asked me to pass on her thanks to all officers involved.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 26.15	20.05.2015	Letter	Feedback re Arson Conviction: On behalf of the prosecution team I would like to thank you for your assistance in this case, your help and co-operation was crucial in bringing it to justice and your contribution is greatly appreciated	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 27.15	15.06.2015	Email	Feedback following visit: All of your staff who we met were enthusiastic, informative and a credit to your service, particular thanks to the Officer who organised the day.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 28.15	24.06.2015	Email	Massive thank you and Bravo Zulu from Runcorn Sea Cadets to the staff at Runcorn Fire Station for all their help and hospitality tonight. Our junior cadets enjoyed the tour of station, learnt lots and haven't stopped talking about using the hose!	Service Delivery
Compliment 29.15	06.07.2015	Website	Feedback re attendance at a garage fire: The firefighters did a brilliant job in their kits in the horrendous heat. Very proud.	Service Delivery
Compliment 30.15	06.07.2015	Website	Thanks to all at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and beyond for giving their time for the Biker Down course today. Well worth attending, very informative and great for everyone, not just bikers, we took a great deal of knowledge away with us today.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 31.15	06.07.2015	Email	I would like to pass on my thanks to Holmes Chapel who attended my daughters school fair this weekend they were fantastic and really engaged with the children	Service Delivery
Compliment 32.15	13.07.2015	Website	Big thumbs up to the Think Drive Survive crew. Very informative course should be compulsory.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 33.15	13.07.2015	Website	Thank you for coming to my parents house for a fire safety assessment. The Home Safety Advisor was wonderful in the way she spoke with and assisted my elderly parents not just on their fire safty but dealing with other age related problems. Please pass our thanks to all involved who have cared for them and helped them.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 34.15	15.07.2015	Website	Huge thanks to the Cadet team and of course the fantastic Cadets and Firefighters at Sandbach Fire Station who made a little boy's day today. Not only do you keep us safe, build schools in developing countries and raise awareness, you take time out to show an excited little boy (and his equally excited parents) around your brilliant station; putting on a demonstration for him and taking us out for a turn in a fire engine!! Thank you	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 35.15	15.07.2015	Website	My spinning session was thwarted today by an electrical fire. Great response from Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service - there before building had been fully evacuated! Smoke venting after the fire extinguished meant spinning was cancelled but rather that than become toast! Of course the fire could have become more serious - we're lucky to have our FARS to rely on.	Service Delivery
Compliment 36.15	17.07.2015	Website	Just had the loveliest lady from Cheshire Fire visit me for a free home check. Definitely worth booking one. I completely forgot to ask for her name! But was really helpful and gave lots of advice and fitted a new smoke alarm.	

Compliment 37.15	17.07.2015	Website	I would just like to thank a member of staff from the Home Safety Advisor department. She was very polite, friendly and helpful whilst installing a smoke alarm at my home. She is a credit to you! Please pass on my kind thanks to her.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 38.15	19.07.2015	Website	What a brilliant job Red Watch from Ellesmere Port did last night when they responded to a call from my house to attend a fire in the garage. Professional, efficient, courteous and helpful commend them highly enough'	Service Delivery
Compliment 39.15	21.07.2015	Website	Thank you for the first-class service you have provided to the media during the Bosley incident.	Planning, Performance and Communications
Compliment 40.15	24.07.2015	Letter	To all the families of the dreadfully sad tragedy at the Wood Mill also to include Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Police for their efforts. Thinking of you all.	Service Delivery
Compliment 41.15	24.07.2015	Letter	Deepest sympathy over the loss of life at the wood mill. I admire the skills and bravery and sacrifice of CFRS and the other FRS's who helped and the Police and Ambulance Services.	Service Delivery
Compliment 42.15	25.07.2015	Email	Thank you to Chris Roddaway and the rest of White Watch who attended the incident at the Red Lion in Chester. They could not have been more helpful and professional.	Service Delivery
Compliment 43.15	06.08.2015	Website	Thanks for coming to Victoria Park in Widnes to the Children's Centre party. The staff were really accommodating.	Service Delivery
Compliment 44.15	14.08.2015	Email	Express gratitude to the Service for an excellent visit following a referral for an HSA (High Risk).	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 45.15	17.08.2015	Website	Tanker Fire on Motorway, Brilliant Job by fire fighters prevented a major incident becoming a disaster.	Service Delivery
Compliment 46.15	17.08.2015	Email	Thank you for the alerts that you send by email they are extremely helpful.	Planning, Performance and Communications
Compliment 47.15	17.08.2015	Website	Job well done. Prompt response to what we thought to be a hopeless cause this morning well done, cows were stuck in swimming pool.	Service Delivery
Compliment 48.15	17.08.2015	CFS Website	Just thinking how busy you have been lately with major incidents. Bosley wood floor mill, Oulton Park plane crash, and M56 Calor gas Tanker. Hats off to you guys tremendous work. Well Done.	Service Delivery
Compliment 49.15	17.08.2015	Website	Emergency call in the early hours of the morning, electric junction box in store room Widnes, email received to say thank you.	Service Delivery
Compliment 50.15	01.09.2015	Twitter	I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all the crews involved today in getting my dog out of the river. I can only stress to others in this situation how dangerous, despite it being a sunny, fairly warm day, going into the river can be as the cold water nearly had disastrous consequences for my husband. Thanks again.	Service Delivery
Compliment 51.15	02.09.2015	Facebook	Thank you to the lovely gents at Nantwich fire station for giving a few moments of your time to my little boy who is currently still on cloud nine! All the amazing hard work you do in the community and you still have time for a fire fighter mad 3 year old who told me that he is definitely going to be a fireman - Thank you.	Service Delivery
Compliment 52.15	26.08.2015	Letter	Thank you to all who attended the Chimney fire at Old Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, Somerford - Booths on Friday 24th July. The Service you provided was outstanding, please accept this donation. Note: the donation was sent to the firefighters charity.	Service Delivery
Compliment 53.15	8.9.2015	Letter	Thank you to officers for rescuing me from my car along with 4 other people. I was able to remain calm and aware of the situation largely due to the skills and efforts of your colleagues. Their teamwork and professionalism not only led to the safe rescue of me and my friends but also made an awful situation somewhat more bearable.	Service Delivery
Compliment 54.15	10.9.2015	Twitter	One fire engine from Frodsham and the animal rescue unit from Bollington rescued a horse stuck in a ditch. Rebecca commented - "I can't thank you enough for rescuing Alfie. You are wonderful people!"	Service Delivery
Compliment 55.15	16.9.15	Twitter	Comment re Frodsham Fire Station Open Day - We were there with our climbing wall, just a quick message to say how much me and Matt throughly enjoyed the day made very welcome especially by Stacey Dearden hope to maybe see you again very soon keep up the great work you do.	Service Delivery

Compliment 56.15	21.09.15	Letter	A Watch: Thank you from mother of a 19 year old boy who came off his motorbike in Grappenhall. Her son can remember the firefighter holding his hand and making him feel safe, we cannot say thank you enough and thanks to you all he is still with us.	Service Delivery
Compliment 57.15	30.09.2015	Email	Watch Manager Mark Caine at Alsager showed my wife and I round the Community resource section. His enthusiasm to explain and show us everything was great as were the facilities. We look forward to hearing of development in the opening up of the meeting room(s) when you have sorted the relevant protocols.	Service Delivery
Compliment 58.15	01.10.2015	Email	I would like to thank you for your participation this year, to make the HANFA Summer Scheme such an enjoyable time for the children and young people who attend our Scheme. Thank you once again for all the hard work you put into ensuring an enjoyable time was had by all	Service Delivery
Compliment 59.15	16.10.2015	Facebook	Thank you for everything you have done today, words can't describe how grateful we are to you all. You worked non stop dealing with the fire at our thatched roof cottage and for keeping us all safe. We are eternally grateful. Thank you all again.	Service Delivery
Compliment 60.15	16.10.2015	Letter	Thank you so so much for rescuing our dogs and home last Thursday evening. The service was exemplary and you should be proud. We are very very grateful.	Service Delivery
Compliment 61.15	19.10.2015	Website	I rang Winsford this afternoon as my smoke alarm was crackling. I was soon transferred to the appropriate dept who said they would arrange for the manufacturer to ring regarding a replacement. Well done.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 62.15	19.10.2015	Website	Please thank all that helped get my parents cat out from between the house wall and garage of their house a short while ago. They were all fantastic and went well above and beyond the call of duty to get him safe again. Thank you so much	Service Delivery
Compliment 63.15	05.11.2015	Email	On behalf of myself, my sisters and my mum, I would like to thank Green Watch at Chester who dealt with a problem she had with her electric smoke alarms which were going off and we couldn't stop them without shutting off the power. We rang the fire service for advice and Green Watch offered to visit and set up battery ones. We are extremely grateful for the support offered especially as its bonfire night. Stay safe all of you. Thanks again	Service Delivery
Compliment 64.15	06.11.2015	Email	I wanted to pass on my thanks and say what a wonderful fire service we have in Warrington. I called the fire brigade yesterday at 2pm as my daughter was locked in my car with the engine running. They arrived really quickly and were courteous and helpful. Each and every one of them was professional and polite. Absolutely amazing. Thank you so much.	Service Delivery
Compliment 65.15	10.11.2015	Facebook	Can I say a huge thank you to you all for your help on Friday. If it hadn't been for your quick reactions in my loft my house would have been a gonner, also massive thanks to Rich, the fire man who kept running in my house to get my phone and car keys etc.	Service Delivery
Compliment 66.15	10.11.2015	Feedback	Fire in bin compound in Runcorn: From the bottom of our hearts we would like to thank you for everything you have done for our family.	Service Delivery
Compliment 67.15	23.11.2015	Feedback	A very big thank you to firefighters who were called to my property in Chester when smoke and fumes were coming out of the flue of our woodburner, Team arrived very quickly calmed the situation, they were very thorough checking a number of areas (thermal image on the chimney and in the bedroom chimney breast).	Service Delivery
Compliment 68.15	30.11.2015	Facebook	Thank you to Widnes fire Station, my son come down to the Fire Station with his grandma they looked after him and was excited to sit in the Fire Engine. He had some blood taken that day and the crew really cheered him up.	Service Delivery
Compliment 69.15	22.01.2016	Facebook	Thank you to the fireman who came last night after my 999 call. My husband had fallen on the stairs, the firefighters were kind, sympathetic and lifted him with great care and explained what they were doing at each stage.	Service Delivery
Compliment 70.15	25.02.2016	Letter	Sincere thanks for the support and assistance offered by the Cheshire Fire & Rescue service in December 2015. The level of goodwill and team work that followed was incredible.	Service Delivery
Compliment 71.15	26.02.2016	Blog	Congratulations to the Choir.	Choir
Compliment 72.15	26.02.2016	Blog	Very proud of everyone in the Choir.	Choir

Compliment 73.15	25.02.2016	Website	Congratulations to the Choir.	Choir
Compliment 74.15	29.02.2016	Website	Great help and excellent. We had a problem with our smoke alarm are were unable to solve the problem, I phoned the station at 8pm within half an hour two officers turned up at our home they are a credit to Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service.	Chester Fire Station
Compliment 75.15	04.03.2016	Website	Comments: Wonderful moving & emotional performance we will not forget you all well done.	Choir
Compliment 76.15	03.03.2016	Letter	Thank you on behalf of Church Minshull WI for your time and talk. Every Member was truly engrossed and it was good to learn a little more about the work you do. Your cadets are most fortunate to be led by such a great team.	Prevention and Protection
Compliment 77.15	16.3.2016	Twitter	Thank you for welcoming our Foundation pupils yesterday, They all had a brilliant time! Thanks again to your team at the Chester station, they were truly inspiring.	Service Delivery
Compliment 78.15	18.03.2016	Website	We would like to say thank you to the crew from Congleton Fire Station for visiting us. We really appreciated your community support. We will be contacting the Chronicle and will mention the support from Congleton Fire Station.	Service Delivery
Compliment 79.15	29.03.2016	Website	Thanks to the firefighter who has raised over £1,000 for our Appeal. It's people like him who give the Brigade a good name. His fund raising has made a big difference to the appeal, financially and publically.	Service Delivery
Compliment 80.15	30.03.2016	Facebook	Feedback from RTC on M56: My family and I can't thank the team who helped my mum and aunty enough. I really am so very grateful to the crew who attended. Please pass on our thanks for their caring and compassion at what was understandably an extremely distressing time.	Service Delivery
Compliment 81.15	30.03.2016	Facebook	I would like to say a huge thank you on behalf of the Warrington Rainbows and Leaders to the firefighters at Warrington who showed our girls around the station. They had a great time and learnt a lot and had tons of fun as well.	Service Delivery
Compliment 82.15	15.03.2016	Letter	I would like to formally thank you very much indeed for your splendid support for our Sponsored Family Fun Run, Walk and Cycle day.	Prevention and Protection

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CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE : 6 JULY 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR : JOANNE SMITH

**SUBJECT : SUMMARY OF MEMBERS ATTENDANCE
JUNE 2015 - MAY 2016**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with information about Member attendance.
2. To allow Members to consider whether they wish to make any amendments to the principles previously adopted in respect of the monitoring process.

Recommended That:

- [1] the summary of Member attendance at meetings of the Authority and its three main Committees for 2015-2016 be noted; and
- [2] Members consider whether they wish to make any changes to the established principles and acceptable attendance levels for future monitoring reports.

Background

3. The terms of reference for this Committee includes the responsibility to *'Monitor Member attendance and recommend action to the Fire Authority'*.
4. Members have previously agreed that an acceptable level of attendance is deemed to be 70% in respect of the four main decision-making bodies (Fire Authority, Policy Committee, Performance and Overview Committee and Governance and Constitution Committee). Members also agreed to adopt the following principles:
 - (a) In addition to recording Member attendance at the four main decision-making bodies, information will be collected on attendance at other bodies, including attendance at conferences and seminars. This additional information will be made available at the request of the Committee;
 - (b) Should the Committee consider a Member's attendance is unsatisfactory, the circumstances will be referred by the Chair of the Committee to the relevant Member, in the first instance, and the Group Leader of the relevant party for action; and

- (c) If this action does not improve the position, a formal resolution from the Committee will be sought to refer the matter to the Party whip at the constituent authority for determination.

Information

5. Appendix 1 includes a summary in respect of Member attendance at the Fire Authority and three main committees for 2015-16. Members are asked to consider this information and the current principles outlined in paragraph 4 and decide whether they wish to make any changes. Only one Member had attendance which fell below the 70% level of attendance according to the criteria applied. However she has only missed two meetings but as the criteria only includes the 4 main meetings of the Authority it has taken the attendance level below 70%.
6. At its meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee on 16th July 2014 Members requested that consideration be given to revising the information provided to more accurately reflect Member commitment by including details of attendance at additional meetings, conferences and events. Appendix 2 of this report provides details of the planning days attended and additional meetings attended by Members in their roles as a Lead Member and/or Member Champion. There are also a number of conference and events that Members attend on behalf of the Authority and these figures are available on request.

Financial Implications

7. There are no financial considerations in respect of this report.

Legal Implications

8. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality & Diversity Implications

9. There are no equality & diversity implications. It is important, however, that there are processes and procedures in place to ensure that Members are treated fairly and in line with the agreed policy.

Environmental Implications

10. There are no environmental implications.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

Members Attendance Summary June 14 - May 15

	G&C Meetings Held 3	Policy Meetings Held 6	P&O Meetings Held 4	CFA Meetings Held 5	Total Meetings Attended	Apologies Received
Cllr Bailey	N/A	N/A	3	4	7	2
Cllr Biggin	2	5	N/A	5	12	2
Cllr Booher	N/A	5	N/A	5	10	1
Cllr Carey	N/A	5	N/A	3	8	3
Cllr Daniels	2	N/A	N/A	4	6	2
Cllr Edgar*	N/A	2 of 3	N/A	3 of 4	5	2
Cllr Flude**	N/A	2 of 3	N/A	5	7	1
Cllr Harris	N/A	N/A	3	5	8	1
Cllr Joyce	N/A	5	N/A	5	10	1
Cllr Mahon	N/A	N/A	4	5	9	0
Cllr Marren	2	N/A	N/A	5	7	1
Cllr Mercer	N/A	N/A	3	5	8	1
Cllr Merry	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	3	2
Cllr Morgan	3	N/A	3	4	10	2
Cllr Nelson	N/A	4	N/A	5	9	2
Cllr Parker	N/A	4	N/A	4	8	1
Cllr Polhill	3	N/A	N/A	5	8	0
Cllr Rudd	N/A	5	N/A	5	10	1
Cllr N Wright	N/A	N/A	4	5	9	0
Cllr S Wright	3	N/A	N/A	5	8	0
Cllr Sherlock**	N/A	3 of 3	N/A	5	8	0
Cllr Simon	N/A	N/A	4	5	9	0
Cllr Weatherill	N/A	6	N/A	4	10	1
INDEPENDENT MEMBERS						
Mr Garner	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	0
Mr McBride	3	N/A	3	N/A	6	1
Mr Ravenscroft	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	0

* Councillor Edgar was appointed to the Authority part way through the year

** Councillor Sherlock replaced Councillor Flude on Policy Committee in December 2015

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Members Attendance Summary June 15 - May 16

	Additional Meetings	Planning Days (4)	Total of additional meetings / events attended
Cllr Bailey		3	3
Cllr Biggin	8	3	11
Cllr Booher	1	4	5
Cllr Carey	7	3	10
Cllr Daniels	1	4	5
Cllr Edgar	3	2	5
Cllr Flude	8	3	11
Cllr Harris	3	4	7
Cllr Joyce	10	4	14
Cllr Mahon	6	4	10
Cllr Marren		3	3
Cllr Mercer	5	4	9
Cllr Merry	11	3	14
Cllr Morgan	5	3	8
Cllr Nelson	15	4	19
Cllr Parker	6	4	10
Cllr Polhill		4	4
Cllr Rudd	11	3	14
Cllr Sherlock		2	2
Cllr Simon		3	3
Cllr Weatherill	2	3	5
Cllr S Wright	2	4	6
Cllr N Wright	2	4	6
TOTALS	106	75	181

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