



**Wednesday,
7 December 2016
10.30 am**

**Meeting of
Fire Authority
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 FIRE AUTHORITY

WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2016

Time : 10.30 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 Chair's Announcements

To receive any announcements that the Chair wishes to make prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting.

1D Declaration 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.

1E Minutes of Fire Authority Meeting

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 21st September 2016.

(Pages 1 - 10)

1F Minutes of Policy Committee

The meeting of the Policy Committee scheduled for 14th September 2016 was cancelled.

1G Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

To receive, for information, the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee meeting held on 16th November 2016.

(Pages 11 - 16)

1H Minutes of Governance and Constitution Committee

To receive, for information, the minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee meeting held on 5th October 2016.

(Pages 17 - 20)

1I Minutes of Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee

To receive, for information, the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee meeting held on 9th November 2016.

(Pages 21 - 22)

- 1J Notes of the Member Training and Development Group** (Pages 23 - 26)
To receive, for information, the notes of the Member Training and Development Group meeting held on 4th October 2016.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

- 2 2017-18 Draft Budget, Council Tax and Medium Term Financial Plan** (Pages 27 - 36)
- 3 Annual Audit Letter for Cheshire Fire Authority: Year ended 31st March 2016** (Pages 37 - 48)
- 4 Appointment of External Auditors** (Pages 49 - 52)
- 5 Treasury Management- Mid Year Report 2016-17** (Pages 53 - 56)
- 6 Unwanted Fire Signals - Policy Proposals** (Pages 57 - 68)
- 7 Member Development Strategy 2017-18** (Pages 69 - 80)
- 8 Timetable of Meetings 2017-18** (Pages 81 - 84)
- 9 Blue Light Collaboration - Further Change to Scope** (Pages 85 - 86)
- 10 Exclusion of Press and Public** (Pages 87 - 88)

PART 2 - BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE

- 11 Proposals Relating to Chester Fire Station** (Pages 89 - 110)



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 21 September 2016 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors D Bailey, P Booher, A Dirir, D Flude, P Harris, E Johnson, D Marren, J Mercer, G Merry, K Mundry, S Nelson, R Polhill, S Parker, B Rudd, M Simon, M Tarr and S Wright

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Deynem, D Mahon, L Morgan, J Saunders, T Sherlock and J Weatherill.

C Chair's Announcements

The Chair asked Members to note the content of the Chair's Announcements which included details of the Authority's achievements and events Members had attended since the Annual Meeting in June. It also included dates for Members diaries for forthcoming events in October and November 2016.

D Declaration of Members' Interests

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services stated that those Members from Warrington Borough Council appeared to have a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest in Item 15, Option to Purchase Land adjacent to Stockton Heath Fire Station. He suggested that the decision did not appear likely to significantly affect the financial interests of Warrington Borough Council so that those Members should be able to take part in any debate and vote.

E Minutes of Fire Authority

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 15th June 2016 be approved as a correct record.

F Minutes of Policy Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy Committee held on 22nd June 2016 be received, for information.

G Minutes of Closure of Accounts Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Closure of Accounts Committee held on 22nd June 2016 be received, for information.

H Minutes of Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 28th June 2016 be received, for information.

I Minutes of Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on 6th July 2016 be received, for information.

J Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 24th August 2016 be received, for information.

K Notes of the Member Training and Development Group

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Member Training and Development Group meeting held on 5th July 2016 be received, for information.

2 AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT 2015-16

Robin Baker (the Auditor) introduced the report and provided an overview of the content and purpose which was to highlight the key matters arising from the audit of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016. He referred Members to the key messages arising from the audit and explained to them that everything was satisfactory.

He informed Members of a late adjustment to the 2015/16 accounts of Cheshire East Council relating to the national non-domestic rates provision in mid August. The impact of this on the Authority's accounts was a reduction in the expected income recorded in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement of £36k. This figure was not considered material to the Authority's 2015/16 financial statement and the accounts were not amended.

The Auditor concluded by referring Members to the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion within the report. He explained that Cheshire Fire Authority had proper arrangements in all significant respects to ensure it delivered value for money in its use of resources.

A Member queried why the net pension liability of the Authority had decreased. The Head of Finance explained that this figure was calculated for the Authority by a firm of actuaries, who used a number of assumptions, and therefore the figure was subject to annual fluctuations.

A Member queried why the Authority had recommended including a share of the assets and liabilities of North West Fire Control (NWFC) in the Authority's accounts. The Auditor explained that under the relevant Accounting Standard in relation to group accounts it was considered necessary to do this. However, since the accounts involved in 2015/16 were not material, no amounts had actually been included. The portion would be received in 2016-17, in conjunction with the three other Fire Authorities involved in NWFC.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the content of the Audit Findings Report 2015-16 be noted.

3 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2015-16

The Head of Finance presented the 2015-16 Final Accounts to Members for approval prior to publication before the end of September and explained that the overview of the accounts needed to be considered in conjunction with the Audit Findings Report. He informed Members that full copies of the accounts had been provided in group rooms prior to the Authority meeting and had been made available on the Service's website.

The Head of Finance gave Members an overview of the Final Accounts, the reserves and capital. He concluded by noting that the Authority was required to sign a letter of representation to the External Auditors which explained the Authority's responsibilities in relation to the audit. A copy of the letter was distributed with the agenda and it was recommended that the Authority approve the signing of the letter by the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive.

A Member congratulated the Head of Finance and his team for the work completed on the accounts for 2015-16, but added that the Authority must ensure that the transfers to reserves and the balances of reserves were justified. The Chair confirmed that it was important that the Authority maintained a robust reserves strategy to ensure that the current high levels could be accounted for.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the accounts for 2015-16 be formally approved for publication;

[2] the current balances of the Authority's reserves are noted;

[3] the Authority's underspend in 2015-16 is transferred to the capital reserve: and

[4] the Letter of Representation is approved and the Chair of the Authority is authorised to sign it.

4 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2015-16

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which presented Members with the draft Annual Statement of Assurance, for approval, to meet a requirement in the Fire and Rescue National Framework (2012).

He explained that the Statement outlined the significant financial and operational issues facing the Authority and areas where further improvements could be made to evidence compliance with the Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Members thanked officers for their work and congratulated the Service for its efforts regarding partnerships and collaboration, with particular reference to the work on 'Safe and Well' training and the work with troubled families.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Statement of Assurance 2015-16 be approved and published on the Service's website.

5 EFFICIENCY PLAN AND FOUR YEAR FUNDING SETTLEMENT

The Head of Finance introduced the report and explained that Member approval was sought to apply to the Government in relation to the offer a four year funding settlement. A copy of the letter to the Authority offering four year funding allocations to 2019-20 in return for robust and transparent efficiency plans was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Appendix 2 to the report contained the proposed Efficiency Plan 2015-16 to 2019-20 which had been drafted to meet the Government's requirements outlined in the letter.

The Head of Finance explained how the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) indicated the level of the efficiency challenge the Authority faced (up to 2019-20). He also outlined the savings proposals contained within Appendix 2, which showed how the Authority intended to meet this challenge. He concluded by referring Members to specific areas of the draft Efficiency Plan 2015-16 to 2019-20, such as the sections on collaboration and the reserves strategy which sought to address issues raised in the Minister's letter.

A Member asked whether the decision on retention of business rates (referred to in Agenda item 5A) would impact upon the four year settlement. The Head of Finance explained that the Government had undertaken to honour the figures shown in the four year settlement if the Authority was no longer part of the business rates retention scheme.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the draft Efficiency Plan for 2015-16 to 2019-20 be approved; and

[2] the Authority apply to the Government in relation to the offer of a four year funding settlement.

**5A RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION SELF SUFFICIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
100 % BUSINESS RATES RETENTION**

This report was submitted to the Authority as an Urgent Business Item and was distributed to Members on 20th September 2016. Whilst the consultation document was almost entirely technical in nature and aimed at local billing authorities, there was one question that was directly relevant to the funding of fire authorities. The Head of Finance had discussed the issue with fire finance colleagues and considered that there was merit in providing a response to the question posed. Given the significance of the proposed response the Head of Finance felt that Members should have an opportunity to approve it. As the deadline for responses was 26th September 2016 the Chair ruled that the item be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Head of Finance introduced the report and explained to Members that the Government had issued a consultation which concerned a proposal to allow local authorities to retain 100% of the business rates that they collect. Members were asked to consider the proposed response to a question contained in the consultation concerning whether fire funding should be removed from the business rates retention scheme.

Members discussed the proposed response and were satisfied with it.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the draft response shown in paragraph 4 of the report be approved.

6 PUBLICATION OF ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The interim Head of Communications presented the report to Members which sought approval for the publication of the Service's Annual Report for 2015-16. The draft report incorporated statutory information on the annual Statement of Accounts, summary information about key areas of performance during the last financial year, information about future plans and proposals and key safety messages and advice.

Once approved, an electronic copy of the publication would be published on the Service's website by 30th September and delivery of printed copies to residents would commence on 12 October 2016 and be completed within a week.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Report 2015-16 be approved for publication.

7 DRAFT INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017-18 (IRMP 14)

The Policy and Inclusion Manager presented the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2017-18 (IRMP 14) to Members for approval. He explained that the proposals within the plan were broken down into three areas: developing the organisation; protecting local communities; and responding to emergencies. The

proposals also included projects that would be implemented over the next four years as part of the Emergency Response Review.

The report also provided details in respect of the twelve week consultation programme which would allow public, staff and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on and shape the proposals.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2017-18 (IRMP 14) be approved for formal internal and external consultation.

8 PROVISION OF TRAINING FACILITIES - FUTURE OPTIONS

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the report which presented a number of options for the future provision of operational training facilities for the Service. He informed Members of the five possible options that were identified in the initial options appraisal for the Service's training facilities. He highlighted to Members the suitability assessment criteria that were used to determine the recommendation to Members.

He informed Members that options 1 and 1A detailed in the report were no longer deemed suitable by the review team, and were therefore not recommended. He also informed Members that following discussions with police colleagues Option 3 (to have a joint training facility at Sadler Road for use by both Cheshire police and fire) was not possible or achievable at the present time. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained to Members that option 2A (to have a new training facility at the Sadler Road site, developed and improved to meet future needs) provided the most viable option going forward, as it offered a long term arrangement for the Service's training facilities. Approval of this option would also meant that it was still possible to explore joint police and fire training in the future.

A Member queried if officers could specify the anticipated costs for upgrading the Incident Command Training Suite (ICTS) and whether an ICT upgrade would be required to keep the equipment up-to-date even if nothing else was developed. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that an upgrade would be required within the next year or two to ensure that the training suite had the latest technology available.

RESOLVED: That

[1] option 2A be endorsed as the preferred option; and

[2] expenditure up to a maximum of £500,000 be authorised for officers to develop option 2A to the next stage of a detailed business case.

9 BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION UPDATE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report to Members which provided further information about the Blue Light Collaboration (BLC) Programme. He referred Members to the section of the report containing information

on the scope of the BLC Programme and explained the implications of the decision to retain the Sadler Road site on several areas of the Service.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred Members to the financial aspects of the BLC Collaboration. He informed them that the decision to retain the Sadler Road site had resulted in a number of changes to the programme implementation costs which they now stood at £5.5m. He added that there were still a number of uncertainties surrounding the figures provided and reminded Members that the Authority would be expected to pay 25% of the implementation costs which would now be funded from reserves. He also reiterated that programme savings would be offset by the upkeep costs associated with Sadler Road.

A Member queried what the new Police and Crime Commissioner's position was in respect of the programme. The Chair explained that he had an introductory meeting with him but had not met him to discuss the programme specifically yet.

A Member queried how the Authority would ensure that the Service's vehicle maintenance would not be impacted by the collaboration. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised Members that he did not have any concerns and that officers were collaborating with Cheshire Constabulary to ensure that standards were maintained.

Members discussed staffing issues and a request was made for an update at a future date. It was confirmed that this would be covered at the next Members' Planning Day in November.

RESOLVED: That Members

- [1] the revised scope of the BLC Programme be agreed;**
- [2] the current implementation budget for the BLC Programme be noted;**
- [3] the requirement to fund the BLC Programme be agreed;**
- [4] the situation regarding savings from the BLC Programme be noted;**
- [5] the position concerning the BLC Programme documentation be noted;
and**
- [6] the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to enter into the Programme Collaboration Agreement and Multi-Force Shared Service documentation when he is satisfied with the terms.**

10

PROPOSAL FOR PARTNERSHIP UNDER PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME WITH CERTAS ENERGY UK LIMITED

The Head of Protection introduced the report to Members which provided details of a proposal to enter into a partnership under the Primary Authority Scheme and sought Members approval to apply to the Secretary of State to become a Primary Authority in relation to Certas Energy UK Limited.

The Head of Protection explained the background to the report and what would be required if the Service entered into this partnership. He informed Members that if the partnership was to go ahead any officers assigned to the partnership would undertake further training to address any gaps in knowledge.

RESOLVED: That Members authorise officers to:

[1] seek nomination from the Secretary of State as required by the Primary Authority Scheme; and

[2] enter into a partnership with Certas Energy UK Limited subject to the agreement of satisfactory terms and conditions.

11 UPDATED CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The Head of Communications introduced the report and expanded on the key changes within both the Corporate Communications Strategy and the Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

She highlighted national trends in the current communication landscape and how these compared to Cheshire's own communication landscape. She explained to Members how these trends had influenced the digital strategy of the Service but noted that local papers still played a crucial role in communication in Cheshire. She informed Members that the theme of the Service's strategy was layered messaging to target all groups within Cheshire.

A Member queried whether Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) visits were used for consultations. The Head of Communications informed Members that face-to-face engagement with the public did occur during HSAs and residents were offered an opportunity to complete satisfaction surveys to provide feedback.

A Member enquired as to whether the Service collected and monitored feedback from social media sites. The Head of Communications informed Members that the Service collected feedback from all communication platforms.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Corporate Communications Strategy 2016-18 and the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2016-19 be approved.

12 RECTIFICATION OF TITLE FOR MACCLESFIELD FIRE STATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and explained to Members that the purpose of the report was to secure their approval for the rectification of the registered titles associated with Macclesfield Fire Station (MFS) and Macclesfield Ambulance Station (MAS). He informed Members that the current registered title for MFS included a title plan that actually showed the site of MAS and that the current registered title for MAS included a title plan that actually showed the

site of MFS. Members' approval was sought to rectify this issue.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the rectification of registered titles associated with Macclesfield Fire Station and Macclesfield Ambulance Station be approved.

13 LEASE OF PART OF MACCLESFIELD FIRE STATION TO THE NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and explained that the National Probation Service (NPS) had approached the Service with a proposal to operate part of its services from Macclesfield Fire Station and Members were asked to consider this proposal.

A Member queried whether this proposal was part of the 'Community Pay-Back Scheme' and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that he understood that it was.

RESOLVED: That

[1] a five year lease of part of Macclesfield to the National Probation Service be granted.

14 SURPLUS LAND OFF HALLWOOD LINK ROAD, RUNCORN

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which sought approval from Members for the disposal of a surplus piece of land off Hallwood Link Road, Runcorn.

Members discussed the proposal and a Member queried whether the Authority would seek planning permission prior to selling the land. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that advice would be sought about the best approach to the sale with a view to achieving the best sale price. He noted a Member's comment about 'overage' being considered if there was a sale without planning permission.

RESOLVED: That

[1] officers be authorised to arrange for the disposal of land off Hallwood Link Road, Runcorn.

15 OPTION TO PURCHASE LAND ADJACENT TO STOCKTON HEATH FIRE STATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and informed Members that the Authority had an option to purchase a piece of land adjacent to Stockton Heath Fire Station. He informed Members that there was no operational requirement to extend the fire station site, but purchasing the option land would be likely to enhance the potential value associated with the extended fire station site

should the Authority decide to sell the fire station site in the future.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the option to purchase a piece of land adjacent to Stockton Heath Fire Station be exercised; and**
- [2] the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to complete such documentation as is necessary to effect the purchase.**

16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business listed below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraph indicated:

Paragraph

(3) Information relating to the financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

17 PROPOSALS RELATING TO CHESTER FIRE STATION

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report to Members which contained details of various options in respect of the potential redevelopment of Chester Fire Station.

Members discussed the content of the report and requested further information before making a decision.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the report be deferred for further consideration by Members.**



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday, 16 November 2016 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service
Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillors P Harris, J Mercer, D Bailey, M Simon, D Marren and independent (non-elected) member A Ruddy.

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors H Deynem, L Morgan, and J Saunders.

C Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

D Minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee held on Wednesday 24 August 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

E Minutes of Policy Committee

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee held on Wednesday 22 June 2016 were received, for information.

2 2016-17 Q2 (MID YEAR) REVIEW - FINANCE

The Head of Finance introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the Service's financial position for the second quarter of 2016-17.

He drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 of the report which contained information on the estimated revenue outturn of the Authority compared to the budget as revised after the August meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee. He expanded on the reasons for the variances which had led to the anticipated underspend at mid year of £192k.

The Head of Finance then referred Members to Appendix 2 of the report which

showed the expected outturn on the capital programme. He explained that there was a projected overspend expected on the Emergency Response Programme of £343k and expanded on the reasons for this overspend. He informed Members that the overall overspend remained well within the contingency agreed when the Authority approved the final capital expenditure for the programme.

A Member queried how the underspend would be used by the Service. The Head of Finance informed the Committee that any proposals would go to Members for their consideration and that, in previous years, it has been used to fund IRMP projects.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the 2016-17 Q2 (Mid Year) Finance review and the anticipated financial outturn presented in the report be noted.

3 2016-17 Q2 (MID YEAR) REVIEW - PERFORMANCE

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive introduced the report to Members which provided a mid year review of performance for each of the key performance indicators (KPIs) and a progress update on the delivery of IRMP programmes and projects.

He referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which contained the IRMP Health Report. He provided Members with an update on programmes and projects which were currently slightly delayed (reflected in the amber status on the Health report), including IT delays at Powey Lane and Penketh, on call recruitment at Crewe and Ellesmere Port and the expansion of the Safe and Well visits. He also updated Members on the Blue Light Collaboration Programme and the Emergency Response Programme (ERP2).

A Member queried whether on call recruitment was an ongoing issue at Crewe Fire Station. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed Members that if the required number of on call firefighters were not recruited the project would be brought back to Members for further consideration.

Members also queried the reasons for the IT delays at Powey Lane and Penketh. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed Members that delays to the installation of optical fibre had caused slippage in the project timelines which was reflected in the amber project status for both of these new stations. He also explained that testing was ongoing and Officers were doing all they could to ensure that the IT issues were resolved before the stations became operational.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive referred Members to Appendix 2 which contained the Corporate Performance Scorecard and explained that this reflected the Quarter 2 position against targets set at the start of the year for the organisation's Key Performance Indicators. He expanded on the work that had been undertaken by the Service in response to targets that were not met.

A Member queried the relatively high percentage of deaths in primary fires and accidental dwelling fires amongst over 65s and asked what methods were in place

for the Service to address this. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee of the investigative process that occurred after these incidents and the preventative measures that the Service employed to reduce the risk to this age group.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the 2016-17 Q2 (Mid Year) Performance Review be noted.

4 2016-17 Q2 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS AND FOLLOW UP REPORTS

The Head of Finance introduced Michael Nulty, an Internal Auditor from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), who was in attendance at the meeting and would be presenting the reports to the Committee.

The Auditor advised Members that the Internal Audit Progress Report and Internal Audit Follow Up Report, prepared by the MIAA, provided an update on the progress made in respect of the 2016-17 internal audit plan.

The Internal Audit Progress Report included key areas identified, actions to be delivered by managers and an update on assurance levels, which indicated that overall the findings from the report were very positive with most areas receiving significant assurance.

The Auditor informed Members that the Internal Audit Follow Up Report provided an update on outstanding actions and independent assurance that actions flagged as closed by responsible officers had been completed and evidenced as such.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the 2016-17 Q2 Internal Audit Progress Report and Internal Audit Follow Up Report be noted.

5 AGE UK PARTNERSHIP

The Head of Prevention introduced the report to Members which provided an update on the Service's current partnership arrangements with Age UK and emerging partnerships with other third sector organisations.

He informed Members that the ability to analyse the benefit of the partnership between Age UK and the Service had presented challenges due to data protection issues, a lack of adequate electronic data capture and increased demand on Age UK's capacity.

The Head of Prevention advised Members of emerging partnerships with alternative organisations, such as the British Red Cross, and their potential to offer home visits to some individuals and also have systems in place to provide evidence as to the value of the work carried out.

Members were also informed that funding currently provided to Age UK Cheshire for

the Dementia Advocate service would be reallocated to support a dedicated Dementia Advocate position within the Service's Prevention team to aid the delivery of Safe and Well visits.

A Member queried whether developments on this project would be brought back to Members for further consideration. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive commented that the Head of Prevention could engage with the relevant Member Champion and feedback to all Members as necessary.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Age UK Partnership report be noted.

6 ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT 2015-16

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager introduced the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report 2015-16. He informed Members that the report provided the Authority with information about the management of health and safety in the Service. He highlighted to Members the key achievements of the Service throughout 2015-16 and informed Members that the Service was performing well nationally.

A Member queried whether there were incentives in place to maintain a low percentage of sickness in the Service. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that continual professional development (CPD) rewards of £1k for operational staff and the work of the occupational health unit (OHU) and HR had helped to maintain low sickness levels throughout the Service.

A Member requested further information concerning the statistics presented on violence and aggression towards staff and how many of the incidents were linked to the Prince's Trust Programme. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager informed the Members that he would provide them with a further breakdown of the statistics. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that violence towards the Service's staff was extremely rare and that follow up mechanisms were in place via the police.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report 2015-16 be noted.

7 ANNUAL ROAD SAFETY REPORT 2015-16

The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager introduced the report to Members which attached the Authority's Annual Road Safety Report 2015-16, containing details of the interventions delivered by the Service. A Member queried how the Service recorded the number of faults found in tyre checks as part of the TyreSafe winter driving events and requested that these statistics be provided in future reports.

Members congratulated the Prevention team on the comprehensive report which highlighted the team's work on road safety and their successful public engagement.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Road Safety Report 2015-16 be noted.

8 INTERIM BONFIRE UPDATE

The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager provided Members with an interim update on the preventative and operational activities of the Service during the bonfire period. He confirmed that a full report would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in March 2017.

He reported that there had been a significant increase in the number of fires attended by the Service over the period, with 31 out of the 105 incidents attended occurring in Winsford. The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manger summarised the prevention work carried out by the Service in partnership with the police, with particular reference to work occurring in Winsford in response to the increase in incidents.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the interim bonfire update be noted.

9 PROSECUTIONS UPDATE

The Protection Office Station Manager presented the report which provided an update on the Authority's audit activity and prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order).

He referred Members to the report which detailed the number of ways in which a fire safety inspector may become aware of unsatisfactory business premises and the range of enforcement options available to the inspectors. He advised Members that the Protection department undertakes a routine, risk based programme of audits and inspection which was based on fire frequency data and guidance provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government, supplemented by local intelligence and knowledge.

He concluded by informing Members of the Service's 100% prosecution success rate since the introduction of the Order in October 2006 and the extensive press coverage following each prosecution to provide public reassurance and send a clear deterrent message to businesses.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Prosecution Update be noted.

10 NW FIRE CONTROL - ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report to Members, which provided an update on the performance associated with North West Fire Control (NWFC).

He advised Members that the report provided a broad measure of performance and updated them on system performance, call handling and mobilising performance, costs of service, staff performance, training and skills and meeting arrangements.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the NW Fire Control Annual Report 2015-16 be noted.

11 ON CALL AVAILABILITY

The Head of Service Delivery introduced the report to Members and advised that it offered a comparison of on call performance for the first half of 2015-16 with the same period in 2016-17, including information for all on call fire appliances and a brief explanation of the key issues affecting performance.

He updated Members on the current availability percentage of on call appliances and the procedures and incentives to improve performance. He also informed Members of the current recruitment and retention levels and plans to improve numbers through reward schemes and rolling out the Cardiac Response pilot to on call stations.

A Member queried whether the changes to the Unwanted Fire Signal Policy and resulting decrease in call outs would impact on call stations and retention levels. The Head of Service Delivery advised Members that the volume of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) attended by on call stations was very low, but there could be an impact on call outs. However the implementation of the reward scheme and the introduction of Cardiac Response pilots at on call stations were all measures introduced to improve recruitment and retention levels.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the On Call Availability report be noted.

12 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The forward work programme for 2016-17 was submitted to Members for consideration and they were asked to agree any additional items that they wished to include for future meetings.

A Member requested that a report concerning the performance of the Occupational Health Unit be added to the forward work programme for 2016-17.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 5 October 2016 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors R Polhill, P Booher, E Johnson, D Marren, L Thomson and A Ruddy

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Wright and A Dirir.

C Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

D Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED: That

The minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on 6th July 2016 be approved as a correct record.

2 DISPENSATIONS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and explained that dispensations were initially granted by the Committee on 8th February 2013 to all Members of the Fire Authority. Members were informed that the dispensations were granted for four years (up to 8th February 2017), the maximum period for which they can have effect. As this period was due to expire, he advised that it seemed appropriate to grant the dispensations for a further four years. A list of those Members seeking dispensations was distributed at the meeting:

REQUIRES DISPENSATIONS FOR MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT:

Councillors P Booher, A Dirir, D Flude, P Harris, E Johnson, D Mahon, G Merry, J Mercer, L Morgan, S Parker, R Polhill, D Marren, K Mundry, S Nelson, B Rudd, J Saunders, T Sherlock, M Simon, J Weatherill and S Wright.

REQUIRES DISPENSATIONS FOR MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME:

Councillors D Bailey and M Tarr

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 2 to the report, which was an extract from the report to the Committee on 8th February 2013 and provided detail of the original considerations of the Committee when the dispensations were granted.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the dispensations be granted to the Members of Cheshire Fire Authority listed above to allow them to take part in debates and votes concerning the setting of the Council Tax precept and approval of the Members' Allowances Scheme (and any changes/additions to it).

3 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members that the purpose of the report was to seek Members' approval for the process and timeline for the next review of the Fire Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme. He referred Members to the background information within the report concerning the Authority's previous engagement with an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to review its Scheme. He drew Members' attention to the proposal for the upcoming review.

Members were content with the proposal but stressed that the individual appointed to provide an independent view must be completely independent politically.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme be agreed by Members to commence in November 2016, with the final report to be submitted to the Fire Authority meeting in February 2017 (to take effect from 1st April 2017); and

[2] the process outlined in paragraph 12 of the report be agreed by Members.

4 REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which asked Members to consider and approve changes to the Authority's current Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

He referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which contained the Government's Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice for whistleblowing. He informed Members that the Authority's current policy covered the suggested areas within the Government's guidance document.

The Chair asked how the Service's employees were made aware of the Authority's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained to Members that employees were initially informed of the policy and procedure as part of their induction. Employees were also made aware of the policy and procedure through notices on the information boards, which provided details of the confidential reporting line 'Safecall' that could be used for whistleblowing, and

via the 'Green' (the internal news bulletin).

A Member queried the use of Grant Thornton, the external auditor to the Authority, as a contact for external disclosure due to their relationship with the Service. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised Members that Grant Thornton provided one additional option for employees to communicate any concerns.

A Member suggested that the Authority should consider introducing a Whistleblowing Member Champion. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the Chair of the Governance and Constitution Committee would undertake this role.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the content of the report be noted; and

[2] the updated Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure be approved.

5 REVIEW OF ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY AND ARRANGEMENTS

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report which informed Members of the Authority's anti-bribery arrangements. He explained the importance of ensuring that the Authority had arrangements in place to ensure the prevention of bribery within the organisation and provided details of how the policy was publicised to employees.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the continued approval of the Anti-Bribery Policy be confirmed; and

[2] the arrangements for promoting the Anti-Bribery Policy be noted.

This page is intentionally left blank



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BRIGADE MANAGERS' PAY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 9 November 2016 at P O Conference Room - Fire Headquarters, Cheshire at 1.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors B Rudd, S Nelson, D Flude, G Merry and S Parker

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E Johnson and Councillor M Tarr.

B Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

C Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee, held on 21st March 2016 be confirmed as an accurate record.

2 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated.

Item

Paragraph

Item 3

Chief Fire Officer - Performance Appraisal and Development Scheme (Interim Review)

(1) Information relating to any individual

3 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER - PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (INTERIM REVIEW)

Members had previously agreed key objectives for the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive for 2016-2017 at an appraisal discussion on 21st March 2016. In accordance with the Service's Staff Appraisal scheme the interim appraisal review

meeting should take place at the mid year point to review and consider progress against the objectives, and update objectives and development plans as required.

The Head of People and Development provided information on the key objectives agreed in March 2016 and the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive presented progress made against these objectives for Members to review.

RESOLVED:

That the progress against the key objectives in the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive's appraisal for 2016-2017 be noted.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday, 4 October 2016 at Meeting Room 1 - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors D Flude, S Parker, M Simon and Independent member L Thomson

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor M Tarr.

2 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That

The notes of the meeting held on 5 July 2016 be approved as a correct record.

3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2016/17: QUARTERLY MONITORING

The Member Development Programme 16-17 was approved at the Fire Authority meeting held on 15th June 2016. Members of the Member Training and Development Group (MTDG) were asked to review progress against the programme and to identify any training needs that they felt were not currently being met.

The Democratic Service Manager (DSM) presented the report and provided an update on delivery of the programme to date. She drew Members attention to the appendix attached to the report which provided details of the programme, Members attendance and an overview of the evaluation feedback received. She also informed Members of the current position in relation to the delivery of the induction programme for new Members. Members were asked to note that there had been several changes to dates/sessions to tailor the programme to Members availability and the requirements of the Service.

Members discussed the report and a number of issues were raised which included:

- The need to ensure that Members and appointing authorities were aware of the commitment required for a role on the Fire Authority;
- The importance of attending induction and training sessions for Members to gain an understanding of the Authority, roles and responsibilities and the key issues for the Authority;
- The requirement to ensure Members were trained in the relevant aspects of the Service and governance arrangements to enable them to support officers in preparation for the forthcoming Fire Reform programme which would include the re-introduction of a statutory inspection regime for Fire Authorities.

The Chair commented that she would raise the importance of commitment to training

to Members at the next Fire Authority meeting as this would be particularly important going forward as it was expected that Fire Authority governance arrangements would be closely scrutinised as part of the reform programme. Members input and awareness of the Blue Light Collaboration Programme was also discussed and a request was made to add a visit to Police HQ to the induction programme.

Members queried if there was a role description provided for Fire Authority Members to be considered by local authorities when making appointments to the Authority. The DSM explained that an information pack was provided to local authorities on an annual basis which contained information on Members roles and responsibilities and the commitment required for meetings and Member development. This information was also provided for new Members as part of their induction pack. Members requested that a role/job description be developed to complement the current information provided.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] progress on the delivery of the 2016-17 Member Training and Development Programme be noted; and**
- [2] a draft role/job description be submitted to the December Member Training and Development Group meeting.**

4 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS: PROPOSALS FOR 2016/17

The Leadership Development Adviser (LDA) introduced the report and outlined the details of proposals for Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) for 2016-17. She updated Members on the proposed changes to the forms used for PDRs and advised that the revised forms were attached as appendices to the report.

The LDA drew Members attention to the proposed timelines for individual PDRs and explained that new Members PDRS would be carried out in the first phase of the programme, scheduled to commence in December, as there may be emerging development needs that were not covered by the induction process. The remainder of PDRs would be arranged for January and February 2017 and a report on the outcomes of the reviews and proposed training plans would be submitted to the MTDG in March 2017. The LDA added that once the programme of reviews was completed she would monitor the delivery of the training plan and also review Members Personal Development Plans on a quarterly basis.

Members were content with the proposed changes to the review forms and it was agreed that they would be used for 2016-17 reviews. They also discussed future training and development priorities which included training for trustees (for the Safety Centre) and member input in respect of the future development of the training facilities at Fire HQ.

Members also discussed their roles in the current committee structure and local unitary arrangements. A Member commented that the Unitary Performance Group (UPG) meetings had become more strategic and there was little opportunity to visit local stations and crews to get an idea of what was happening on the ground. She suggested that a survey of Members to get feedback on the current format of the

UPG meetings would be useful to ensure it was fulfilling members' requirements.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the proposals for the delivery of Personal Development Reviews and the revisions to the review forms for 2016-17 be agreed.

5 DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-18

The DSM presented the draft Member Training and Development Strategy to cover the period from January 2017 to June 2018 to Members to approve for submission to the Fire Authority. She explained that, in light of ongoing collaboration programme and the impact on capacity/resources, the strategy was focused on maintaining current standards and the development of current provisions.

A number of points raised during discussions on previous items were picked up at this point which included:

- Adding an objective to ensure that the Authority's training and development programmes would align to any changes introduced as part of the Fire Reform Programme and the introduction of a new inspection regime for Fire;
- Reviewing Member Champion roles and ensuring Member support and input in new ventures and initiatives (eg Apprenticeships Scheme, Safety Centre);
- Member/Officer buddy arrangements – need to ensure continuity during changes to staffing structures;
- Member Satisfaction Survey – to provide more in-depth feedback on the service provided to Fire Authority Members and inform future development.

The Chair requested that these items be brought to the CFO's attention. The DSM explained that she would add an objective to the Strategy in respect of the alignment to future inspection regimes and also in respect of the provision of a Member Satisfaction survey. A revised copy of the Strategy would be distributed to the group prior to submission to Fire Authority. The DSM would also provide a list of actions from the meeting for the attention of the CFO and would progress these actions, as appropriate, with relevant officers. An update would be provided for the group at its next meeting in December.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the draft Member Development Strategy for 2017-18 be approved for submission to the Fire Authority in December 2016 subject to the addition of an objective to link to the future inspection regime and an objective to carry out a Member satisfaction survey; and

[2] a copy of the actions arising from the meeting to be submitted to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, for information and an update on progress be submitted to the next meeting of the MTDG.

This page is intentionally left blank

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE : 7th DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF FINANCE
AUTHOR : PAUL VAUGHAN

SUBJECT : 2017-18 DRAFT BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX
AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the Authority's draft budget for 2017–18 (IRMP 14) and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Recommended

[1] that the report and information relevant to the setting of the 2017-18 budget and MTFP be noted.

Background

- 2 The Authority is required to approve a budget and set the Council Tax precept for the year commencing 1st April 2017. In reaching the decision to approve the budget the Authority must consider all relevant factors, including the likely impact of policy options on the Authority, the prevailing economic climate and the impact of anticipated future grant reductions.
- 3 This is the first of two budget reports; the final report will be considered by the Authority in February 2017. In addition, Members will be asked to consider a range of options to be built into the 2017-18 budget at their planning day on 13th January 2017.
- 4 This report provides background to the financial position of the Authority and refers to the national context. In addition it identifies some risks that the Authority should take into consideration. The report also refers to the Authority's funding position, the MTFP, the capital programme, and the Authority's reserves.

Cheshire Fire Authority Budget for 2016-17

- 5 The Authority's budget for 2016-17 is £42m, financed by Council Tax and Settlement Funding Assessment (a combination of Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates). The Band D Council Tax is set at £71.86 which generates a total of £26m (62% of total funding). The balance of £16m (38%) is met by Settlement Funding Assessment.

- 6 In addition, the Authority approved a capital programme of £2.6m funded from capital receipts and reserves.

The National Context

- 7 There have been significant changes since the approval of the budget for 2016-17. There is now a new Chancellor in place, Britain is leaving the European Union and there has been a change of presidency in the United States. In addition, responsibility for fire and rescue matters at a national level has passed from the Department for Communities and Local Government to the Home Office. This all acts to make the financial outlook more uncertain.
- 8 In the settlement for 2016-17 the Government included a provisional four year settlement (from 2016-17 to 2019-20) and invited authorities to apply for this to be fixed. Authorities wishing to take up the offer had to produce a four-year Efficiency Plan. The Authority approved Cheshire's Efficiency Plan at its meeting on 21st September. At the time of writing it is awaiting the outcome.
- 9 The Chancellor presented his Autumn Statement on 23rd November 2016. The Statement confirmed that the plan to eliminate the budget deficit by 2019-20 has now been deferred, and indicated that growth level projections during the period of the MTFP have reduced. However the Statement made little reference to the detail of the public finances. It is assumed that the four year settlement will form the basis of the detailed settlement in December.

Funding of Cheshire Fire Authority

Council Tax

- 10 The Authority is a precepting authority which means that it generates part of its funding by setting a precept on its four constituent authorities. That precept is included within the Council Tax bills issued to each household within the boroughs of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington. The Authority has in previous years produced a Council Tax Leaflet providing an explanation of the Authority precept for Council Tax payers.
- 11 For the budget for 2016-17, the Authority chose to increase its precept by 1.99%. In previous years, the Government has indicated that if Authorities wish to increase their precept by 2% or more, then they will be required to carry out a referendum. The Government's technical consultation on the 2017-18 settlement indicates that this is likely to continue. For Members' information, a 1.99% increase in precept yields about £0.5m for the Authority and increases the precept on a Band D property by about £1.43p per annum.

- 12 The settlement for 2016-17 included estimates of what the Government saw as future spending power of local authorities, and these estimates were predicated on a 1.75% per annum increase in precept.

Settlement Funding Assessment

- 13 The Settlement Funding Assessment is made up of two elements, Revenue Support Grant and Baseline Funding Level. Baseline Funding Level is itself split into two parts, Business Rates Baseline and Top Up Grant.
- 14 The Government calculates the overall total Settlement Funding Assessment for each authority, and then calculates how much of that should be met by the Baseline Funding Level. Business Rates Baseline is paid to the Authority directly by each of its four constituent authorities. The difference between Baseline Funding Level and Business Rates Baseline is Top Up Grant, paid directly to the Authority by Government. Then the difference between total Baseline Funding Level and the Settlement Funding Assessment is Revenue Support Grant, also paid directly by Government. For ease of analysis, only the total Settlement Funding Assessment is shown in the MTFP. It is this element of funding which is subject to Government cuts. Increases in the Business Rates Baseline are offset by a reduction in Revenue Support Grant, so that these two elements of funding together equal the Settlement Funding Assessment.
- 15 Halton Borough Council is involved as a member of a pilot scheme on the 100% retention of business rates. At the time of writing this report the Authority has not had its meeting with Halton finance colleagues to discuss the budget for 2017-18. At present the understanding is that authorities involved in the pilots will not be financially disadvantaged and this assumption is used in the MTFP.
- 16 In 2016-17, the Authority will also receive a share of Section 31 Grant in respect of business rate reliefs for small businesses, projected to be £235k. It is not known for certain whether this grant will be available in 2017-18, so it is not included in the current versions of the MTFPs.
- 17 The Authority relies on receiving business rates information from its constituent authorities by the end of January each year to enable the budget to be finalised and the Council Tax precept set by 14th February 2017. Members will be aware that there is a business rates revaluation which will take effect from April 2017. There is some concern that this might delay the provision of information to the Authority and that this might make it difficult to meet the tight timetables. Members will be kept informed of progress on this issue, and any impact it may have on the budget setting process.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

- 18 Attached at Appendix 1 is the MTFP agreed by Members in September as part of the draft IRMP 14. As the budget process develops, changes will be made to this MTFP and it will be brought to Members for formal approval with the budget in February 2017.
- 19 Members will note that the savings requirement to balance the MTFP is around £3.8m. Members should be aware that the final year of the MTFP, 2020-21, sits outside the current Comprehensive Spending Review period, and also beyond the four year settlement which the Authority has applied for. An assumption of a 5% cut in Settlement Funding Assessment has been made. Given that the Government has announced that it is not now targeting a balanced budget until the next parliament, it does not seem unreasonable to flag the need for potential future savings during that period.
- 20 The Authority meets with its constituent authorities on a regular basis and discussion includes Council Tax and Business Rates matters. The Authority has included an assumption of growth in its MTFP that Council Tax Base will increase by 1% per annum, including 2017-18. Early indications suggest that Tax Base increases in 2017-18 will be greater than this, and the 1% going beyond 2017-18 does not look unreasonable. Final increases for 2017-18 will be confirmed by the four authorities in the next few weeks. A 1% increase in tax base represents an increase of around £260k, at 2016-17 precept levels.
- 21 The following assumptions have been made within the plans:-
- Settlement Funding Assessment as per the four year settlement, and then a 5% reduction in 2020-21;
 - Pay inflation of 1.5% in 2017-18 (to allow for the apprentice levy) and 1% per annum thereafter over the lifetime of the plan;
 - Non-pay inflation 2% per annum over the lifetime of the plan;
 - Savings of around £3.8m over the next four years of the plan, after unavoidable growth and inflation;
 - Precept increase of 1.99% per annum (and a cap on precept increases of above 1.99% by means of a referendum requirement);
 - Contribution to capital reserves to help to fund the capital programme included in the MTFP.
- 22 Members should note that officers have already developed a list of proposals for growth items and savings for 2017-18 and these are currently being scrutinised by the Service Management Team. Early indications are that unavoidable growth will exceed the estimate of £900k shown in the plan, but that additional savings will compensate for that. Detailed proposals will be placed before Members for scrutiny at their Planning Day on 13th January 2017.

- 23 At the Authority meeting in September, Members approved the Authority's four-year Efficiency Plan. This identified the source of savings in 2017-18 as being primarily from the final stages of the Emergency Response Programme (ERP), the early stages of Emergency Response Programme (ERP2) and some savings from corporate budgets. This remains broadly the case in the plans for the budget for 2017-18 and in the MTFP up to 2019-20, which was the final year taken into account in the Efficiency Plan.
- 24 Whilst the MTFP shows balanced budgets, this assumes the Authority meets the significant financial challenges in the coming four years in relation to savings, which will not be an easy task. This means that the Authority must be robust in its approach to cost saving, minimising risk and revenue growth.

Capital Programme

- 25 The Authority currently funds its capital programme via capital grant, capital receipts, loans taken out with the Public Works Loans Board under the auspices of the Prudential Code for Capital Financing in Local Authorities, and contributions from reserves and revenue.
- 26 All capital proposals are challenged with the same rigour as that applied to revenue proposals as part of the budget building process. Business cases and budget bids for capital spend proposals will be brought for scrutiny to the Member Planning Day on 13th January 2017, before the draft capital programme is presented to Members at the Fire Authority meeting in February 2017.

Reserves

- 27 Reserves enable the Authority to budget with greater confidence and provide greater scope for managing strategic change. In addition they provide resilience against unforeseen operational requirements, earn interest which increases flexibility and offer the opportunity to smooth some of the financial challenges facing the Authority.
- 28 At present the Authority has a General Reserve of £6.5m. It also has substantial earmarked reserves, but this needs to be considered in the light of the demand on reserves from the delivery of the ERP, as described below.
- 29 The Authority has around £2.5m in unspent capital grants. This is included in the Authority's reserves. The capital grant is to fund the ERP, including Safety Central. It is estimated that in the current financial year capital spend will be around £12.5m, and the element of that not funded by grant will be funded from capital and IRMP reserves, which means that reserves will fall by the end of 2016-17. In following years the capital programme will probably be around £2m per annum, primarily comprising the purchase of vehicles and equipment. In addition, the

development of the Training Centre and potential refurbishment of the Fire stations are intended to be funded from reserves.

- 30 Other significant earmarked reserves are required to fund the purchase of personal protective equipment, prevention activity and training.
- 31 The budget report to Members in February 2017 will include more details of the position on reserves, and a risk assessment relating to the general reserve.

Risks to the Financial Scenario

- 32 There is a risk that the Government settlement will differ from the current estimated level, although assuming the Government agrees a four year settlement with the Authority, this risk will diminish. This will become clear only when the detailed settlement details are released by the Government in December 2016, and certain in February 2017 when the settlement is laid before Parliament.
- 33 There is an assumption within the MTFP that the planned savings are delivered in line with original estimates. The Authority has sufficient reserves to smooth savings over different financial years if necessary, but savings must be ultimately achieved. The Authority has rigorous approvals and monitoring processes for managing savings.
- 34 There are risks in relation to the collection of Council Tax, and, particularly, Business Rates, given the volatility of issues such as appeals. The Authority meets regularly with its constituent authorities to ensure it has as much information as possible.
- 35 The MTFP also contains other assumptions, e.g. about inflation, which are based on best intelligence, but which may be subject to future change.
- 36 The Authority currently has a significant capital programme which carries risk of unforeseen events leading to overspends. The Authority has monitoring processes in place to ensure early warning of problems, and professional support where it feels it is needed.

Consultation

- 37 Members will be familiar with the IRMP 14 consultation process which is currently being undertaken. Reports relating to the consultation are presented to Members regularly.

Impact Assessment

- 38 Financial – the body of the report covers the financial implications.
- 39 Legal – the Authority is required to approve a balanced budget and issue its precept notice by mid-February 2017.

- 40 Equality and Diversity - this is a strategic report that does not deal with detailed proposals. Individual policy options and savings will have equality and diversity dimensions and environmental impacts which will be individually identified and assessed.

Conclusion

- 41 This budget report reflects the continuing climate of austerity in which all public sector bodies operate. It also reflects on the difficulty of planning for the future given the level of uncertainty about future finances.
- 42 Members will see from the attached Appendices how the Authority estimates it is impacted by cuts to funding over the life of the MTFP. Of the savings required over the life of the latest plan, ERP and ERP2 will contribute the bulk. Officers are considering further savings proposals, but these are likely to lead to demanding and challenging decisions in future years.

CONTACT: Joanne Smith, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804
BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

This page is intentionally left blank

Cheshire Fire Authority Financial Plan : 2016-17 to 2020-21

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Base Budget pre additions and savings</u>	42,382	42,093	40,725	40,719	41,245
Additions:					
Revenue Growth	293	900	500	1,000	300
(pay 1.5% in	677	659	511	522	543
Section 31 grants Business Rates	36	0	0	0	0
Contribution to PCSOs	1	1	1	1	1
Other savings	(900)	(2,300)	(433)	(433)	(664)
IRMP/Capital reserve	(446)	(628)	(585)	(564)	0
Provision for non collection	50	0	0	0	0
<u>Revised Total Budget Requirement</u>	42,093	40,725	40,719	41,245	41,425
Base Funding b\ fwd					
Council Tax	24,513	25,541	26,314	27,111	27,931
Settlement Funding Assessment	17,436	16,098	14,411	13,609	13,314
Total Base Funding	41,949	41,639	40,725	40,719	41,245
Add Increases \ (Decreases) in Funding:					
Increase in council tax (1.99%)	498	513	528	544	561
Increase /(Reduction) in council taxbase Surplus	530	260	268	276	285
Council Tax	457	0	0	0	0
Busine	(152)	0	0	0	0
Additio	149	0	0	0	0
Transiti	63	16	(79)	0	0
Settlement Funding Assessment	(1,401)	(1,703)	(723)	(295)	(666)
Total movement in funding	144	(914)	(5)	526	180
<u>Total Available Funding</u>	42,093	40,725	40,719	41,245	41,425

Total Efficiencies required 2017-18 to 2020-21

(3,830)

Precept for a Band D Property

71.86

73.29

74.74

76.22

77.73

This page is intentionally left blank

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE : 7th DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF : EXTERNAL AUDITORS

SUBJECT : ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER FOR CHESHIRE
FIRE AUTHORITY: YEAR ENDED 31ST
MARCH 2016

Purpose of Report

1. To present the Annual Audit Letter for the Fire Authority. Representatives from Grant Thornton will attend the meeting to present to Members.

Recommended: That

- [1] the Annual Audit Letter for Cheshire Fire Authority for the year ended 31st March 2016 be noted.

Information

2. The 2015-16 Annual Audit letter from the Authority's External Auditors, Grant Thornton, is attached as an Appendix to this report. The letter summarises the key findings arising from the Audit.

This page is intentionally left blank

The Annual Audit Letter for Cheshire Fire Authority

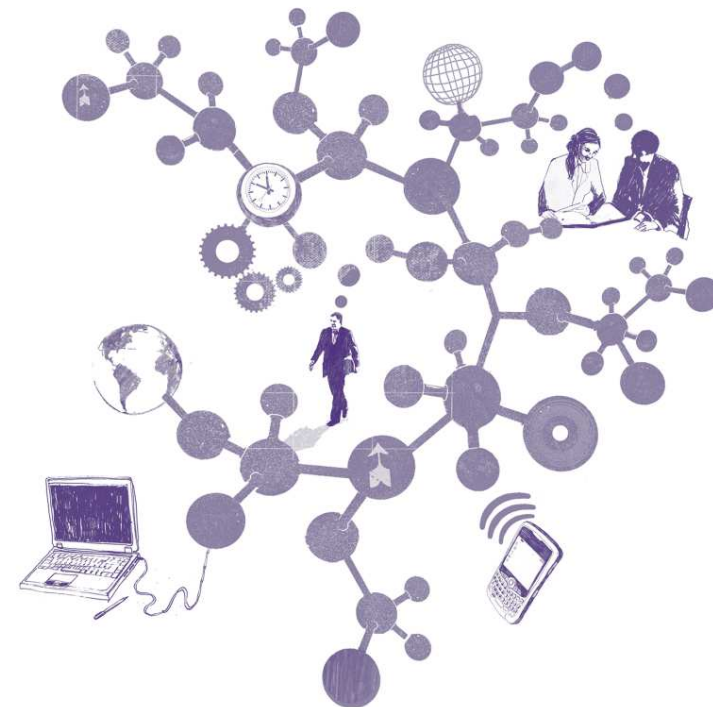
Year ended 31 March 2016

21 October 2016

Robin Baker
Engagement Lead
T 0161 214 6399
E robin.j.baker@uk.gt.com

Perminder Sethi
Senior Manager
T 0113 200 2547
E perminder.sethi@uk.gt.com

Bev Waugh
Executive
T 0151 244 0870
E bev.a.waugh@uk.gt.com



Contents

Section	Page
1. Executive summary	3
2. Audit of the accounts	4
3. Value for Money conclusion	6
4. Working with the Authority	7

Appendices

A Reports issued and fees

Page 40

Executive summary

Purpose of this letter

Our Annual Audit Letter (Letter) summarises the key findings arising from the work that we have carried out at Cheshire Fire Authority (the Authority) for the year ended 31 March 2016.

This Letter is intended to provide a commentary on the results of our work to the Authority and its external stakeholders, and to highlight issues that we wish to draw to the attention of the public. In preparing this letter, we have followed the National Audit Office (NAO)'s Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 07 – 'Auditor Reporting'.

We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to the full Authority as those charged with governance in our Audit Findings Report on 21 September 2016.

Our responsibilities

We have carried out our audit in accordance with the NAO's Code of Audit Practice, which reflects the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act). Our key responsibilities are to:

- give an opinion on the Authority's financial statements (section two)
- assess the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the value for money conclusion) (section three).

In our audit of the Authority's financial statements, we comply with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) (ISAs) and other guidance issued by the NAO.

Our work

Financial statements opinion

We gave an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements on 26 September 2016.

Value for money conclusion

We were satisfied that the Authority put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources during the year ended 31 March 2016. We reflected this in our audit opinion on 26 September 2016.

Certificate

We certified that we had completed the audit of the accounts of Cheshire Fire Authority in accordance with the requirements of the Code on 26 September 2016.

Working with the Authority

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 bring forward the approval and audit of the financial statements to 31 May and 31 July respectively from the 2017/18 financial year. We have continued to work closely with the Head of Finance to bring forward work to meet the earlier closedown requirements.

We would like to record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us during our audit by the Authority's staff.

Grant Thornton UK LLP
21 October 2016

Audit of the accounts

Our audit approach

Materiality

In our audit of the Authority's accounts, we use the concept of materiality to determine the nature, timing and extent of our work, and in evaluating the results of our work. We define materiality as the size of the misstatement in the financial statements that would lead a reasonably knowledgeable person to change or influence their economic decisions.

We determined materiality for our audit of the Authority's accounts to be £724k (being 2% of gross revenue expenditure). We used this benchmark, as in our view, users of the Authority's accounts are most interested in how it has spent the income it has raised from taxation and grants during the year.

We set a lower threshold of £37k, above which we reported errors to the Authority in our Audit Findings Report.

The scope of our audit

Our audit involves obtaining enough evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements to give reasonable assurance that they are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error.

This includes assessing whether:

- the Authority's accounting policies are appropriate, have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- significant accounting estimates made by management are reasonable; and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements gives a true and fair view.

We also read the narrative report and annual governance statement to check they are consistent with our understanding of the Authority and with the accounts on which we give our opinion.

We carry out our audit in line with ISAs (UK and Ireland) and the NAO Code of Audit Practice. We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Authority's business and is risk based.

Audit opinion

We gave an unqualified opinion on the Authority's accounts on 26 September 2016, in advance of the 30 September 2016 national deadline.

The Authority made the accounts available for audit in line with the agreed timetable, and provided a good set of working papers to support them. The finance team responded promptly and efficiently to our queries during the course of the audit.

Issues arising from the audit of the accounts

We reported the key issues from our audit of the accounts to the full Authority meeting on 21 September 2016.

Our audit work identified no adjustments affecting the Authority's reported financial position. The draft financial statements for the year recorded net expenditure of £62,599k. We did however recommend a small number of minor adjustments to improve the presentation and disclosure in the financial statements which were implemented by management.

Audit of the accounts

Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report

We are also required to review the Authority's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report. The Authority published these on its website with the draft accounts in line with the national deadline.

Both documents were prepared in line with relevant guidance and were consistent with the supporting evidence provided by the Authority and with our knowledge of the Cheshire Fire Authority.

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

We considered the consolidation pack which the Authority prepared to support the production of Whole of Government Accounts (WGA). Cheshire Fire Authority is below the reporting threshold, accordingly, a detailed review of the WGA Data Collection Tool (DCT) was not required.

Other statutory duties

We also have additional powers and duties under the Act, including powers to issue a public interest report, make written recommendations, apply to the Court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law, and to give electors the opportunity to raise questions about the Authority's accounts and to raise objections received in relation to the accounts.

We have not identified any issues that have required us to apply our statutory powers and duties under the Act.

Value for Money conclusion

Background

We carried out our review in accordance with the NAO Code of Audit Practice (the Code), following the guidance issued by the NAO in November 2015 which specified the criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

Key findings

We carried out an initial risk assessment in February 2016 and did not identify any significant risks. However, we noted that the Authority continues to face on-going financial challenges but continues to have effective arrangements in place to manage its finances. The actual 2015/16 outturn position was an underspend of £941k against a revised budget of £42.5m, increasing the Authority's general reserves to £7.4m at the year end. During the year, the Authority also spent £6.1m on capital (non current assets), with over £5m of this spend relating to the build costs of three new fire stations as well as 'Safety Central', a dedicated safety centre.

The Service continues to work with Cheshire Police on Blue Light Collaboration with a view to integrating back-office and professional services. The arrangements for closer working are overseen by the Blue Light Collaboration Board. The Authority agreed during April 2016 to also co-locate its headquarters to the current Police headquarters, it is hoped this will foster closer working arrangements as well as generate financial efficiencies for both organisations. This transition to the Police headquarters has now commenced.

The Authority also continues to work with its partners and stakeholders and has agreed a number of new initiatives, including for example, acting as first responder for cardiac arrests, as well as, working with North West Ambulance Service to provide access to ambulance staff to patient homes.

From January 2016, the responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services moved from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the Home Office. At this stage, the Authority remains uncertain as to whether this change will have any financial impact on the Authority.

We updated our risk assessment during the final accounts audit and through regular meetings with senior management, continuing to review relevant documents including minutes of meetings. We did not identify any further significant risks where we needed to perform further work.

Overall VfM conclusion

We are satisfied that in all significant respects the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2016.

Working with the Authority

Our work with you in 2015/16

We are really pleased to have worked with you over the past year. We have established a positive and constructive relationship. Together we have delivered some great outcomes.

An efficient audit – we delivered the accounts audit in line with the timescale we agreed with you. Our audit team are knowledgeable and experienced in your financial accounts and systems.

Understanding your operational health – through the value for money conclusion we provided you with assurance on your operational effectiveness.

Bringing forward work - The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 bring forward the approval and audit of the financial statements to 31 May and 31 July respectively from the 2017/18. We have continued to work closely with the Head of Finance during the year to bring forward work to meet the earlier closedown requirements.

Providing training – we provided your team with training on financial accounts and annual reporting.

Appendix A: Reports issued and fees

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and the provision of non-audit services to Cheshire Fire Authority.

Fees

	Proposed fee £	Final fee £
Authority audit	29,860	29,860
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	29,860	29,860

The proposed fees for the year were in line with the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA).

In addition, we have set out below our fees for the provision of other services to the Authority.

Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
Non-audit services:	
• 2020 Vision Workshop	4,643
Total	4,643

Reports issued

Report	Date issued
Audit Plan	February 2016
Audit Findings Report	August 2016
Annual Audit Letter	October 2016



© 2016 Grant Thornton UK LLP. All rights served.

'Grant Thornton' refers to the brand under which the Grant Thornton member firms provide assurance, tax and advisory services to their clients and/or refers to one or more member firms, as the context requires.

Grant Thornton UK LLP is a member firm of Grant Thornton International LTD (GTIL). GTIL and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. GTIL and each member firm is a separate legal entity. Services are delivered by the member firms. GTIL does not provide services to clients. GTIL, and its member firms are not agents of, and do not obligate, one another and are not liable for one another's acts or omissions.

grant-thornton.co.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 7th DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF: HEAD OF FINANCE
AUTHOR: HEAD OF FINANCE

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members' approval for a process for the appointment of external auditors (the auditor) for 2018-19.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members approve option 2 (as outlined in paragraph 8) and opt in to the appointing person arrangements for appointing the auditor from 2018-19 for a period of 5 years.

Background

2. In 2012-13 the Audit Commission ceased directly delivering audit services to public bodies. They continued acting in a commissioning role, and they appointed Grant Thornton as the auditor to the Fire Authority from the financial year 2012-13. The contract is in place until the financial year 2017-18.
3. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act), put in place a new local audit and accountability framework for public bodies in England.
4. Section 7 of the Act requires local authorities and other public bodies, as "relevant authorities", to appoint an auditor to audit their accounts. An authority may appoint an auditor for more than one financial year up to a maximum of five years.
5. Section 9 of the Act stipulates that each relevant authority must have an auditor panel. The auditor panel must advise on the recruitment and selection of an auditor and the maintenance of an independent relationship with the auditor appointed. The auditor panel may be appointed by a single relevant authority or by one or more relevant authorities.
6. The auditor panel must consist of a majority of independent members (or wholly of independent members), and must be chaired by an independent member. A member of an auditor panel, is "independent" if:

- (i) the panel member has not been a member or officer of the relevant authority within the period of 5 years ending with that time, and
 - (ii) the panel member has not been an officer or employee of an entity connected with the relevant authority within that period, and
 - (iii) the panel member is not at that time a relative or close friend of a member or officer of the relevant authority or an officer or employee of an entity connected with the relevant authority.
7. Section 17 of the Act gives the Secretary of State the power to make provision, by regulations, for certain relevant authorities to have an auditor appointed on their behalf by a body (an 'appointing person') specified by the Secretary of State. This is to allow for sector-led collective procurement arrangements, under which relevant authorities would be able to opt to have their auditor appointed by a specified sector-led body, rather than appoint locally. In July 2016, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government specified Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) as the "appointing person" under the Act. PSAA are an independent not for profit company established by the Local Government Association who already manage the current external audit arrangements nationally under contracts novated from the Audit Commission.

Information

8. The Authority has two options to appoint an auditor for 2018-19, most probably for five years. They are:
- (1) to set up an auditor panel, either on its own or jointly with others, and appoint an auditor
 - (2) to opt into the appointing person arrangements made by PSAA in respect of the procurement of an auditor.
9. The main benefit of the first option is that it allows the Authority direct involvement in the appointment process. However, this may be difficult and will involve some risks.
10. The appointment of an independent auditor panel is likely to be difficult as the Authority will need to find members with the necessary skills who wish to join the panel.
11. There is a cost and time to the procurement process which is likely to be significantly higher per authority for an individual or group of authorities than a national tendering exercise
12. There are very few firms qualified to carry out the audits and it is likely that the same firms would be involved as would be involved in the national tendering exercise under option 2. It seems highly unlikely that a sole or small joint tendering exercise involving the same pool of firms would be as competitive as a national one, so audit fees might be higher.

13. PSAA will manage the contract on behalf of the Authority and deal with any issues arising from it.
14. PSAA will focus on audit quality which would be difficult for a sole or small group of authorities to achieve.
15. PSAA will have the information and opportunity to benchmark audit performance.
16. Whilst some of our local partner authorities (local authorities, fire authorities and the Police and Crime Commissioner) are yet to make a decision, most have indicated they are likely to take option 2 themselves. This may make finding local bodies to partner with difficult. Nationally, PSAA has received positive responses from over 270 bodies.
17. If the Authority accepts the recommendation and agrees option 2, then the timetable is as follows:
 - Closing date for receipt of notices to opt into PSAA appointing process is 9 March 2017. Once this date has passed it will not be possible to opt into the process until April 2018.
 - Tenders for external audit to be invited in February 2017 by PSAA.
 - PSAA to award contract in June 2017, followed by period of consultation with the audited body and appointment made by 31 December 2017.
18. If option 1 was agreed, then a local timetable would need to be determined. The award of contract could be later than in the above timetable, but auditor appointments must be made by 31 December 2017.

Financial Implications

19. The external audit fee for 2016-17 is £29,860. It is not possible at this stage to assess what the implications on fees of the change in the arrangements will be, but as indicated in the report, it would seem likely that a national procurement exercise carried out by PSAA would lead to a lower level of fees. External audit fees have generally fallen significantly in recent years.

Legal Implications

20. The Authority must meet the requirements of the Act, and the course of action recommended in the report will enable it to do so.

Equality and Diversity Implications

21. There are no known equality and diversity implications.

Environmental Implications

22. There are no known environmental implications.

This page is intentionally left blank

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE : 7th DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF FINANCE
AUTHOR : PAUL VAUGHAN

SUBJECT : TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID YEAR
 REPORT 2016-17

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members on performance against the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy (TMS).

Recommended That:

[1] the report be noted.

Background

General

2. Treasury Management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, banking, money market and capital market transactions, together with the effective control of the risks associated with those activities.
3. The Authority agreed its annual TMS for 2016-17 at its meeting on 10th February 2016.
4. The table below shows the Authority's treasury portfolio at the end of September 2016:

Treasury Portfolio	Balance 31March 2016	Balance 31 Sept 2016	Movement during the year
	£000	£000	£000
Long term borrowing	(1,914)	(1,914)	0
Investments	22,800	22,950	150
Net position	20,886	21,036	150

Investments

5. The Authority continues to maintain high levels of cash which are suitably invested. The Authority's strategy in recent years has been to fund the capital (and revenue) costs of the Emergency Response Programme and other Integrated Risk Management Plan related programmes from reserves and capital grant rather than to borrow. More generally going forward, the strategy is to fund capital from revenue, in the likely absence of capital grants.
6. The Authority continues to invest prudently in line with its agreed investment policy. At 30th September 2016 the Authority had the following investments:

	£000
Lloyds	9,950
Barclays	7,500
Santander UK	5,500
Total	22,950

Borrowing

7. The Authority's overall long term borrowing position at 30th September 2016 is a total of £1,914k. The Authority has Public Works Loan Board loans of £1,892k, having recently repaid a maturing PWLB loan of £322k. The Authority also has an interest free loan with Salix of £33k, but £11k of the Salix loan will be repaid in the current financial year and so is treated as short term borrowing, leaving £22k to be included as long term borrowing.
8. The Authority's latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which covers the period up to 2020-21 does not currently show any need for borrowing. The MTFP is kept under review and will be regularly updated and shared with Members during the forthcoming 2017-18 budget preparation.
9. The Authority will review its long term borrowing as it builds its budget for 2016-17, and considers its likely capital programme for the life of the current MTFP and beyond, and more detail will be brought to Members as part of the budget process. This will include a review of the feasibility of premature debt repayment.

Compliance with Prudential Indicators.

10. The following table compares the estimated performance on key Prudential Indicators in 2015-16 against those which are currently approved.

Prudential Indicator	2016-17 Indicator	2015-16 Estimated Performance
Capital Expenditure	£14,999k	£12,770k
Every effort is made to avoid slippage so these two numbers should be as near to each other as possible. However, there has been slippage on vehicle procurement. This reflects, a desire to ensure that robust specification and procurement processes lead to value for money for the Authority. In addition, the estimate slightly overestimated the amount of spend on ERP in the year.		
Ratio of financing costs (borrowing costs to revenue streams)	1.33%	1.33%
This measures the impact on Council Tax of the increase in borrowing cost has on precept as a ratio. At this stage, there is no estimated change.		
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)(underlying need to borrow)	£7,646	£7,646k
This reflects the strategy of the Authority in fully funding capital from reserves.		
Gross borrowing requirement (compares CFR to actual debt)	£5,693k	£5,693k
This shows the CFR less outstanding debt. The Authority's strategy of fully funding from reserves means that this will remain fairly low for the life of the MTFP.		
Authorised limit for external debt.	£3,953k	£3,953k
This is the limit of debt which the Authority has approved given the current capital programme.		
Operational boundary for external debt	£1,992k	£1,914k
This is the estimated likely level of debt given the current capital programme.		

Prudential Indicator	2016-17 Indicator	2015-16 Estimated Performance
Fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%
This reflects the current debt position, as all debt is at a fixed interest rate. This offers certainty and protects the Authority from interest rate volatility. The debt the Authority has was all taken out before the financial crisis, and the subsequent significant lowering of interest rates.		
Variable interest rate exposure	40%	0
The estimated performance is based on borrowing which has been in place for some years and is all at a fixed rate. Should the Authority wish to borrow in future years, setting this indicator to allow some variable interest rate exposure gives the Authority room to consider whether the variable or fixed interest rates would be the most appropriate at the time.		
Investment periods	£5,000k only for more than 364 days	No more than £5,000k at any time
This protects against a lack of flexibility in the Authority's investments and is being adhered to.		

Financial Implications

11. The subject of this report is financial.

Legal Implications

12. The TMS is required in order to comply with obligations imposed by the Local Government Act 2003, the 2009 CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and the latest investment guidance from Central Government which came into effect in April 2010.

Equality & Diversity Implications

13. There are no known equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

14. There are no known environmental issues arising from this report.

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

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PROTECTION
AUTHOR: IAN KAY/MANDY EELES

SUBJECT: UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS - POLICY PROPOSALS

Purpose of Report

1. To present proposed amendments to the Authority's Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) policy. The proposals are in keeping with the plan previously agreed by Members to incrementally change our response to Automated Fire Alarms (AFAs). Should these proposals be implemented it would increase non-attendance to a number of buildings, so this report also sets out the rationale behind the proposed policy changes and details the anticipated reductions which could be achieved.

Recommended that:

- [1] the report be considered; and
- [2] Members approve the adoption and implementation of Option 2 (detailed in paragraphs 29 to 34) to assist the Service in reducing the number of UwFS further.

Background

2. The Service's original UwFS policy was introduced in 2007. In July 2012 the policy was revised significantly following extensive consultation and briefing sessions with both internal and external stakeholders. The main features of the revised policy were:
 - the introduction of a call-challenge procedure;
 - a change to the pre-determined attendance to AFAs;
 - the enhancement of the advice given in response to single UwFS; and
 - the implementation of more robust ways of managing the Service's relationship with the parties responsible for premises with unacceptably high levels of AFAs.
3. The objectives of the revised policy were:
 - to secure a reduction in the number of false alarms generated by automatic fire detection and alarm systems, by encouraging improved maintenance of systems;
 - to reduce appliance movements, unnecessary costs and disruption to both the Service and the business community; and

- to reduce the risk to the public and Service personnel through unnecessary emergency responses.
4. In February 2014 the UwFS policy was amended again following consideration of the first twelve month's performance and lessons learned. Member's approved a move to non-attendance at non-sleeping risk commercial buildings between 09.00 and 17.00 hours unless the caller is at the building and reasonably believes a fire has broken out. Outside of these hours (17.00-09.00) non-sleeping risk premises continue to be subject to the call-challenge process.
 5. The call-challenge procedure does not currently apply to any sleeping risk premises (sleeping risk premises include hospitals and residential care homes) and these premises continue to receive an emergency attendance.
 6. Industrial sites which are licensed under either the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) or Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) (REPPPIR) regulations are excluded from the non-attendance policy due to their unique risk.

Impact of policy changes on performance

7. The current UwFS policy has now been in effect for almost two years and since 2014 the Service has achieved a reduction of 23%. In the number of attendances to AFAs. We are unlikely to experience further significant reduction in numbers unless we review the policy again and consider alternative ways of responding to AFAs.
8. This report considers and suggests a number of ways in which the Service could achieve further reductions in the number of attendances to AFAs in line with the incremental change policy previously agreed by Members. These proposals will have a positive impact on administrative burdens, increase wholtime crew capacity to carry out other work and contribute to a reduction in on-call costs.
9. The majority of false alarms are caused by faulty alarms, normal human activity within buildings resulting in accidental or careless activation of the fire alarm, dust, cooking fumes and failure to inform alarm receiving centres (ARCs) when testing alarms.
10. Tables 1 and 2 show a 16% reduction was achieved in 2015/16 (compared to the same period in the previous year). During 2015-16 the Service attended 1,048 AFAs which when compared to the total number of 7,718 incidents attended by the Service over the same period, equates to 14% of all calls.
11. The 46% reduction in incidents is equivalent to attending 898 fewer incidents last year compared to 5 years ago, an average of over 2.4 fewer every day.

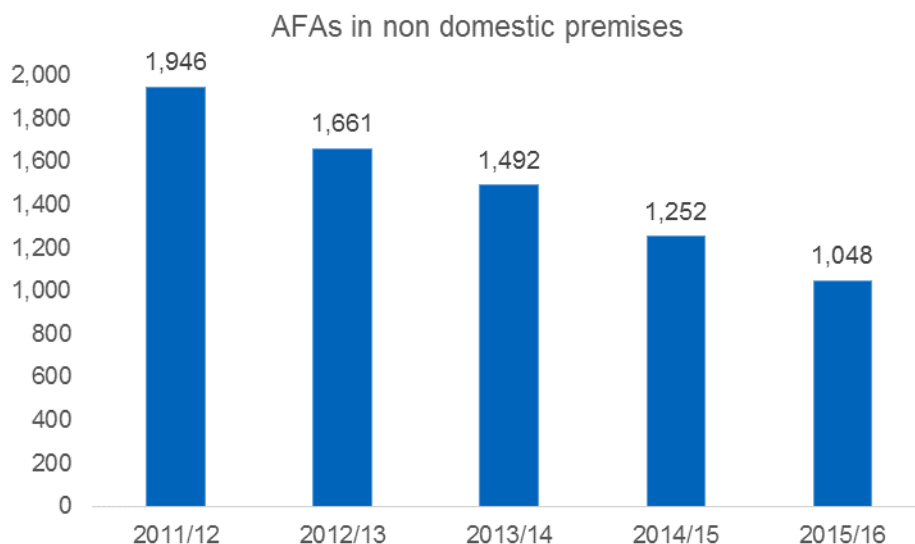
Table 1: Number of attendances to AFAs over last 5 years (including % reduction)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Annual Change*	5 Year Change
2011/12	436	538	500	472	1,946		
2012/13	473	432	399	357	1,661	-15%	
2013/14	346	459	408	279	1,492	-10%	
2014/15	283	428	316	225	1,252	-16%	
2015/16	226	306	278	238	1,048	-16%	-46%
Total**	1,764	2,163	1,901	1,571	7,399		

* Annual Change denotes % reduction on previous year's figures.

** Total number of AFAs.

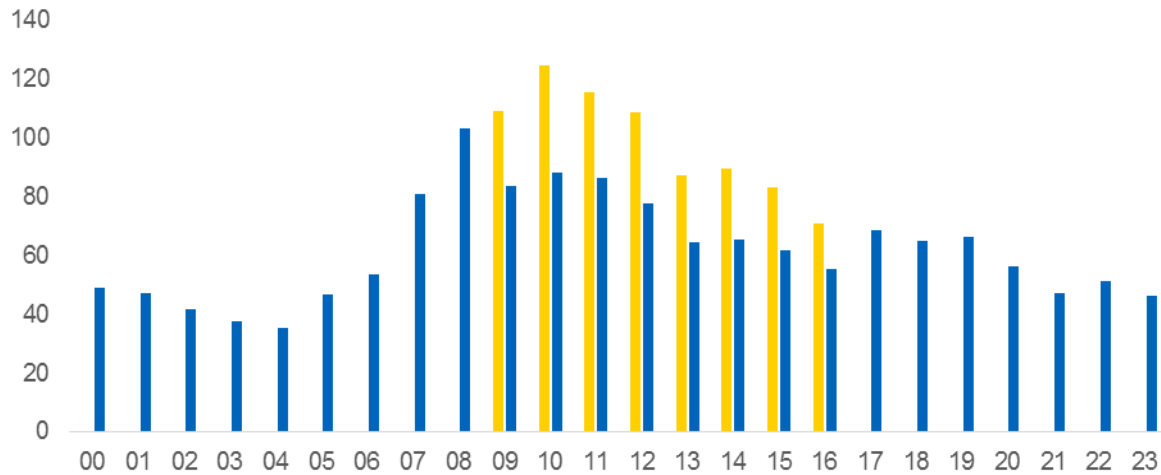
Table 2: Number of attendances to AFAs over last 5 years



12. Table 3 shows the hours at which these incidents have happened as an average over the past five years, highlighting the impact the implementation of the 9 to 5 non-attendance has had. It also tells us that previously the majority of AFAs occurred during daytime hours (yellow bars). The implementation of the 9 to 5 element of the UwFS policy has reduced this differential significantly.
13. The premises producing the AFAs during the day are now mostly residential or other policy exempt premises. Therefore, further reduction measures need to be focused either on non-attendance to these types of premises during the day or extending the current policy to a non-attendance at non-residential non-domestic premises 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Table 3: 5 year average attendance to AFAs in non-domestic premises by hour

Yellow bars denote the average for 9-5 before the last policy implementation



14. Of the total, 1,048, AFAs in 2015-16, 348 (33%) were in sleeping-risk premises and 700 (67%) were at non-sleeping commercial buildings. Table 4 details the five most frequently attended premises types over the past five years that account for 43% of all activations. Notably, the non-residential premises represent 23% of this total.

Table 4: The top five property types involved in AFAs

Property type	AFAs attended	% of all AFAs attended
Hospital	1,045	14%
Purpose built office	677	9%
Infant/primary school	622	9%
Nursing/Care	466	6%
Single shop	388	5%
Total	3,238	43%

Number of primary fires attended that originated as AFAs

15. Upon receiving a call from an ARC, North West Fire Control (NWFC) will ask the ARC whether it is a confirmed fire. It is the responsibility of the ARC to make contact with the premises and confirm if a fire exists prior to informing NWFC. In the case that calls are received from ARCs which have not completed a 'call back' to the premises the ARC should be asked to make 'call back' and advise the premises to ring 999 should they discover a fire. If the ARC is uncooperative and refuses to undertake a

'call back', they should be informed that the Service will not be attending.

16. Over the past five years, only 0.2% of all incidents attended were to non-domestic primary fires where the original call type was thought to be an AFA. Notably, 69% of these fires required no firefighting as they were small and out on arrival.

Impact of responding to UwFS

17. Mobilising appliances to each AFA call causes a significant impact on the Service for the following reasons:
 - Fire appliances are not available to respond to genuine life threatening emergencies.
 - Responding to AFAs under blue light conditions poses an unnecessary risk to staff and other road users.
 - Operational crews are disrupted whilst undertaking other core tasks such as training and community safety activities.
 - Financial costs are incurred for fuel and there is an associated impact on the environment caused by the appliance movements.
 - On-call firefighters require payment for being alerted and are unnecessarily disrupted from their primary employment.

Approach of other North West Fire and Rescue Services

18. Within the region, Merseyside FRS currently has the most 'stringent' policy as it uses a non-attendance approach (unless the premises is a private dwelling, in which case it receives a PDA of two pumps) and all sleeping risk premises are exempt during night time hours (7.30pm to 7.30am). There is no call-challenge approach to their policy; premises are simply advised that they must ring 999 if they discover a fire.
19. Lancashire FRS, calls received via ARCs are not call-challenged and if unconfirmed fire one pump is mobilised under blue lights to all premises. Manchester FRS's strategy is to send one pump to non-domestic, two pumps to domestic AFAs and four to high-rise premises. Cumbria currently send one pump to residential dwellings and non-domestic sleeping risk 24/7. They do not respond to non-domestic premises unless there is a confirmed fire. Due to the remote location of some non-domestic premises they will send one pump where no contact can be made with the key-holder. They have some exempted premises such as COMAH sites and PFI hospitals because of specific structural issues.
20. A regional approach to reducing AFAs is currently under consideration. However, given local requirements and varying demographics it is unlikely that a consensus of approach will be agreed.

Options for consideration

21. The current UwFS policy includes taking a staged approach to managing premises who hit the relevant trigger points for increased AFAs and in our Service Area as a whole there are only six premises at Stage 1 and four at Stage 2. All of those at Stage 2 are hospital premises (sleeping risk) and

as such are excluded from the Stage 2 requirements and managed in a different way. At this point it must be noted that evacuation from any type of premises (including hospitals) is the responsibility of the occupier and must be controlled by their Risk Assessment process which must allow protection or evacuation of residents safely and not rely on FRS response.

22. The Service continues to investigate ways to actively reduce the total number of AFAs whilst continuing to operate within the policy boundaries. Two possible options to help the Service achieve more significant reductions are detailed below taking into account lessons learnt over the past 12 months and from other FRSs nationally.

Option 1 - non-attendance for all non-domestic buildings during 09.00 to 17.00 hrs

23. The introduction of a non-attendance approach to all non-domestic buildings during daytime hours, seven days a week.
24. The proposed change in procedure would mean that the Service will not attend actuations of automatic fire detection systems to all properties if they are not supported by a phone call to confirm a fire service attendance is required. During this time period most premises will have someone available to investigate the cause of the alarm, who can then confirm if a fire has occurred.
25. During weekends there may be some non-residential commercial buildings which are unoccupied, but equally the absence of occupiers will reduce the risk of both AFAs and a fire occurring. The Service will then be able to respond to confirmed fires, not just an alarm sounding and send the appropriate number of firefighters and fire appliances immediately, confident that there is a real incident to deal with.
26. All premises would be included in this option with the exception of high-rise, residential dwellings and COMAH sites. It should be noted that in the case of residential care premises it is common practice during the day to have a greater staff ratio to assist with the evacuation and call-challenge and the residents tend to be awake thus reducing the sleeping risk. Non-domestic sleeping risk premises will receive an attendance during evening and night-time hours.
27. Premises with sleeping risk are by their nature higher risk than non-sleeping commercial risks; this is mainly due to the slower reaction times of the occupants. People who are asleep will be reliant on automatic fire detection to warn them, should a fire break out, therefore between higher risk hours (17.00-09.00) an emergency response will continue to be sent without delay. However, it should be recognised that due to increased number of staff and number of non-sleeping residents during daytime period evacuation times are greatly reduced.
28. This option would realise a 16.8% reduction based on 2015-2016 figures. Resulting in a reduction of 176 attendances. Table 5 illustrates this option and has been reflected over a five year period.

**Table 5: Table showing reductions achieved by Option 1
(Non-attendance at all non-domestic premises between 09.00 and 17.00hrs)**

	All incidents	Total incidents 09.00-17.00	% reduction if 09.00-17.00 not attended
2011/12	1,946	958	-49.2%
2012/13	1,661	754	-45.3%
2013/14	1,492	675	-45.2%
2014/15	1,252	352	-28.1%
2015/16	1,048	176	-16.8%
Total	7,399	2,915	-39.5%

Option 2 – Non-attendance for all non-domestic non-sleeping risk premises (extending our current 09.00-17.00 policy to 24 hours)

29. The introduction of a non-attendance approach to non-sleeping non-domestic buildings twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.
30. The proposed change in procedure would mean that the Service will not attend actuations of automatic fire detection systems to low risk properties, if they are not supported by a phone call to confirm a fire service attendance is required. During weekends and evenings there may be some non-domestic buildings which are unoccupied, but equally the absence of occupiers will reduce the risk of both AFAs and a fire occurring.
31. The Service will then be able to respond to confirmed fires, not just an alarm sounding and send the appropriate number of firefighters and fire appliances immediately, confident that there is a real incident to deal with.
32. This option would realise a 66.8% reduction based on 2015-2016 figures. Resulting in a reduction of 700 attendances. Table 6 illustrates this option and has been reflected over a five year period.

**Table 6: Showing reductions achieved by Option 2
(Non-attendance at all non-domestic non-sleeping risk premises 24/7)**

	All incidents	Total incidents in non-sleeping risk	% reduction if non-sleeping risk not attended
2011/12	1,946	1,410	-72.5%
2012/13	1,661	1,151	-69.3%
2013/14	1,492	1,065	-71.4%
2014/15	1,252	868	-69.3%
2015/16	1,048	700	-66.8%
Total	7,399	5,194	-70.2%

33. Cheshire is unusual amongst other FRSs in that it has a large number of hazardous premises designated under the COMAH regulations. These sites contain large quantities of dangerous chemicals and therefore they present a risk not only to the site but also the surrounding homes and businesses if a fire were to occur. During 2015/16 the Service attended a very small number of AFAs at COMAH sites, therefore due to the minimal impact of continuing to attend these AFAs these should be excluded from the non-attendance approach.
34. Table 7 (attached as Appendix 1) sets out the Service's current attendance policy and summarises Options 1 and 2.

Financial implications

35. There will be no additional costs as a result of the implementation of either of the proposed options. Non-cashable savings will be made, but it is impossible to fully quantify these savings which would include, for example; direct payment for on-call staff; overtime and fuel costs.

Legal implications

36. The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) Section 7 states:
- (1) A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of:
 - (a) extinguishing fires in its area, and
 - (b) protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area.
 - (2) In making provision under subsection (1) a fire and rescue authority must in particular:
 - (c) make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel, and
 - (d) make arrangements for ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from action taken for the purposes mentioned in subsection (1).
37. There is little case law relating to the activities of FRSs so it is difficult to be certain what these provisions mean precisely. For example, it is arguable that an AFA is not strictly a call for help, nor is there necessarily a fire (as the statistics show). However, notwithstanding this, it is important that the Service's approach is reasonable in all of the circumstances.
38. If the proposals are approved, the Authority would only be operating in a similar way to a number of other fire and rescue authorities. The approach is not novel and has essentially been 'tried and tested' in other FRSs. However, this does not guarantee that there will be no challenge, nor will it provide protection against possible legal liability.

Equality and Diversity implications

39. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has previously been completed for the policy however, should the proposals within this policy be adopted then the EIA will be updated.
40. The new proposals do not impact on any protected characteristics. The appropriate communication channels will be used to inform all affected premises owners/responsible persons of the new approach to AFAs.
41. It is noted that in the last twelve months no equality and diversity issues have arisen.

Environmental implications

42. The reduced number of unnecessary appliance movements will have had a positive impact on the environment, mainly due to a decrease in emissions and fuel costs, contributing to an overall reduction in the Service's carbon footprint. The proposed policy changes will therefore contribute to a further reduction in the Service's carbon footprint.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804
BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**

This page is intentionally left blank

Table 7: AFA attendance comparison

	Attendance to AFAs day-time (9am to 5pm)	Attendance to AFAs (outside hours)	Exemptions from policy	Likely reduction in AFAs (% based on 2015/16 figures)	Financial implications	Public Safety & Environmental implications
Current UwFS Policy	Non-attendance to non-sleeping risk premises <i>(unless caller at building & reasonably believes there is a fire).</i>	Non-sleeping risk premises subject to call-challenge. No call-challenge for sleeping risk premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-rise • Sleeping risk premises • Residential dwellings • COMAH/REPPIR sites 	1.1%	– Negligible savings.	
Option 1 Page 67	Non-attendance for ALL non-domestic premises including sleeping risk <i>(unless caller at building & reasonably believes there is a fire).</i>	Non-sleeping risk premises subject to call-challenge. No call-challenge for sleeping risk premises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-rise • <i>Sleeping risk premises (outside hours)</i> • Residential dwellings • COMAH/REPPIR sites 	16.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduced fuel costs – Reduction in resource requirements – Reduced on-call costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 176 less attendances per annum. • Decrease in emissions/reduced carbon footprint. • crews available to attend other 'real' emergencies, training and community safety activities. • reduced risk of 'blue lights' / high-speed vehicles being involved in road accidents
Option 2	Non-attendance for ALL non-sleeping risk premises 24/7 <i>(unless caller at building & reasonably believes there is a fire).</i>	Non-attendance to ALL non-domestic non-sleeping risk premises 24/7 <i>(unless caller at building & reasonably believes there is a fire).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-rise • Sleeping risk premises • Residential dwellings • COMAH/REPPIR sites 	66.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reduced fuel costs – Reduction in resource requirements – Reduced on-call costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700 less attendances per annum. • Decrease in emissions/reduced carbon footprint. • crews available to attend other 'real' emergencies, training and community safety activities. • reduced risk of 'blue-lights' / high-speed vehicles being involved in road accidents

This page is intentionally left blank

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 7TH DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF: HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR: JOANNE SMITH

SUBJECT: MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-18

Purpose of Report

1. To present the draft Member Development Strategy for 2017-18 for approval.

Recommended: That

[1] the draft Member Development Strategy 2017-18 (attached at Appendix 1) be approved.

Background

2. The Member Training and Development Group (MTDG) works with Officers to develop the future direction of Member development in the Fire Authority and ensure that Member development programmes are developed in line with the Authority's Member Development Strategy and both Members' and the Service's needs.
3. The MTDG has met to discuss the content and format of the Strategy to cover the period from 2017 to 2018 and the final draft was presented to the 4th October meeting. Members had previously discussed the development of the future strategy at the meeting held on 5th July and it was agreed that, whilst the Blue Light Collaboration programme was being implemented, work on Level 2 of the North West Charter would be deferred. Members felt that as capacity and resources would be impacted during this time officers should concentrate on ensuring that scheduled Member Development activities were delivered.
4. With this in mind it is proposed that the next Member Development Strategy covers the period from January 2017 to June 2018 and focuses on maintaining the standards already achieved and the development of the current provision. Once the BLC programme is implemented Members and Officers will be able to review Member Development support and consider future options.

Financial Implications

5. The costs of implementing the Strategy will initially be met from within the existing budget. The Strategy will assist in ensuring that resources are used to deliver a more effective Member Development Programme that

has been developed to meet Members' needs to carry out their roles and responsibilities for the Authority. The need for any additional training resources as the objectives in the implementation plan are progressed will be monitored during the year.

Legal Implications

6. There are no specific legal requirements arising from this report. However Member training will assist Members when making decisions helping to ensure that the Fire Authority meets its statutory obligations.

Equality & Diversity Implications

7. There are no specific Equality and Diversity implications. However Equality and Diversity Training for Members is now included in the Induction Programme for new Members to be carried out within the first 6 months of joining the Authority and as a core module on the Member Development Programme.

Environmental Implications

8. There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report. Environmental Awareness Training for Members is now included in the Induction Programme for new Members and updates will be considered for inclusion in any future Member Training Programmes.

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



Making Cheshire Safer

Member Development Strategy 2017-18



**Cheshire Fire Authority
Member Development Strategy
2017- 2018**

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Aims of the Strategy**
- 3. Key Objectives**
 - 3.1 Members Personal Development Plans**
 - 3.2 Review of Personal Development Review Process**
 - 3.3 Delivery of Member Development Programme**
 - 3.4 Delivery of Member Induction Programme**
 - 3.5 Role of Member Champions**
 - 3.5 Continuous Development**
- 4. Role of Member Training and Development Group**
- 5. Implementation and Review**
- 6. Outcomes**

Appendices

- A. Implementation Plan**

1. Introduction

The Member Development Strategy provides the framework for future Member support and development and forms the basis of an effective Member Induction Programme.

The Strategy aims to make a contribution to achieving the Service's vision and the key aims and organisational objectives of the Integrated Risk Management Plan. Members are an integral part of the progress made towards achieving the Service's Vision and it is important to ensure that Members are equipped with the skills required to fulfil this role.

The 2017-18 Strategy will continue to focus on continuous development and improvement with consideration given to review the provision in light of the impact of changes to the Service and Authority membership.

2. Aims of the Strategy

The overall aim of the Strategy is to ensure that all Members have access and undertake adequate training and development opportunities to better enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members and to engage and have an impact on their communities through this role.

Key aims include:

- **Provision of a clear framework for the development of Members based upon their individual needs and the needs of the Authority as a whole;**
- **Ensuring Members have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet their needs to fulfil their roles and are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities;**
- **To support the continued development of Members;**
- **To ensure a consistent approach to Member Development.**

The Strategy confirms the Authority's commitment to learning and development for Members and sets out some of the main activities that will be undertaken to support Member development.

Fire Authority Members also have a responsibility to commit to undertaking training and development activities identified which will enable them to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members.

3. Key Objectives

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that all Members are trained and developed to fulfil their roles on the Fire Authority and ensure that the following objectives are met:

- **Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs through Personal Development Reviews;**
- **Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members;**
- **Provision of an Annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources;**
- **Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members;**
- **Ensure that Members have the opportunity to develop specific skills in line with specific Member Champion roles; and**
- **Ensure that there is an emphasis on continuous development and improvement for Members to align with any changes to the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Authority.**

The following actions will be undertaken to assist in the implementation of the Strategy in line with the key objectives:

3.1 Members Personal Development Plans

All Fire Authority Members will complete an annual Personal Development Plan. This will be carried out within the Personal Development Review process through which training and development plans will be agreed with each Member.

Development needs identified will be prioritised and key themes identified will be fed into the annual Member Development Programme.

3.2 Review of Members Personal Development Process

A review and refresh of the process will be completed to ensure that the process remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members on the Authority.

3.3 Delivery of Member Development Programme

Members nominated to the Cheshire Fire Authority will already undertake Member Development Programmes within their own Local Authority, but as a Member of the Cheshire Fire Authority, Members must undertake specific

learning and development programmes in connection with their roles on the Fire Authority.

- **Member Training and Development Programme** - will be drawn up based on inputs from several sources. These will include formal learning needs analysis, Members' own personal development plans, suggestions from Officers/Members, Budget and IRMP proposals, new legislation, central Government and local initiatives, partnership working, and other external influences. All training and development activities provided for Members will be consistent with, and support, the Fire Authority's Strategy and Service Policies. The programme will be kept under review to ensure that it aligns with any specific development needs required to support the implementation of any changes introduced as part of the Fire Reform programme and the introduction of a new inspection regime for Fire.
- **Members Planning Days** – The Authority holds up to five planning days a year which align with the corporate IRMP planning process to engage with Members on the future direction of the Service.
- **Monitoring** - Progress against the plan will be monitored by the Member Training and Development Group on a quarterly basis. The group will also review the Programme annually to ensure that it remains in line with the Authority's Strategy and Service Policies and the Governance Framework. Regular monitoring of the programme will assist to ensure that the changing needs of Fire Authority Members are reflected in the Programme. The Member Training and Development Group will also ensure that activities, when proposed, meet Members' needs and are scheduled and delivered appropriately and effectively.

3.4 Delivery of Member Induction Programme

Cheshire Fire Authority is committed to ensuring that all new Members are supported when they join the Authority through an effective induction process. The induction process will include an induction programme for new Members which will be supported by the provision of a generic information pack. This process was implemented in 2011/12 and has proved effective up to this date. Feedback from new Members who have completed the induction programme has been very positive and the programme is reviewed and, if necessary, revised on an annual basis to ensure it remains effective and appropriate.

- **Members Induction Programme** – will consist of a programme of sessions to provide an overview of Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Fire Authority. Core modules for new Members such as Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity will also be included to ensure that new Members are clear on their roles and responsibilities as Fire Authority Members in these key areas.
- **Members Information Pack** - will provide sufficient information for Members new to fire and rescue responsibilities to begin their role. It will include key contact details, information on the terms of reference and constitution for all the Authority's meetings, calendar of meetings,

together with details of the various forms/declarations which Members are required to complete.

- **Buddy System** – the Officer/Member Buddy system provides an alignment of elected Members to members of the Service Management team (SMT), to provide information and support on a range of Service, Policy and Organisational issues. Officer buddies are available to Members for the purpose of developing their overall knowledge of fire and rescue. Where possible, buddies will provide answers to questions and queries themselves or after consulting colleagues.

3.5 Member Champions

One of the key outcomes of the delivery of the Member Development Strategy should be that Members possess the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the Fire Authority.

Members who have been appointed to Member Champion roles have become well established and valued for the roles they fulfil. It is important that Members who are appointed to these roles have the opportunity to develop specific skills in line with these roles and are provided with the support required to maximise their impact within their individual Member Champion remit. This will be factored into Members individual PDRs in consultation with People and Development.

It is also proposed that a review/refresh of current Member Champion roles is carried out to ensure that they still support the Authority's overarching role in the changing environment in which the Fire Authority operates.

3.6 Continuous Development

Review and Evaluation of Programmes

Member Development activities need to meet the requirements of both Members and the Authority. Constant evaluation and review of the programmes offered should ensure that these requirements are being met. The Authority needs to ensure that Value for Money is obtained and the benefits/impacts for Members, the Authority and the Community can be measured.

There are a number of processes in place to ensure that the programmes offered are constantly reviewed and evaluated which includes:

- Each Member will be asked to complete an evaluation form in relation to the training and development that has been undertaken. These forms will be collated and monitored by Democratic Services and a synopsis of the feedback will be presented to the Member Training and Development Group as a regular agenda item. Copies are also provided for relevant Officers to help inform future training and delivery requirements.

- The Personal Development Review process provides Members with the opportunity to reflect on how the training they have received has impacted upon them and their performances. Where relevant, comments can be fed back to the Member Training and Development Group.
- The Member Training and Development group receive quarterly reports on the deliver of the Member Development Programme and the implementation of the Member Development Strategy which enables them to regularly monitor and review these documents.

A Member satisfaction survey will also be carried out in 2017 to provide more in-depth feedback on the service provided to Fire Authority Members and inform future development.

4. Role of Member Training and Development Group

The Member Training and Development Group is responsible for advising the Fire Authority on the development, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy and also ensuring that the Member Development Programme is developed in line with the Strategy.

The cross-party group comprises of four Members and one Independent Member and reports directly to the Fire Authority on matters relating to Members Training and Development. The Group will present an annual report to the Authority in respect of Member Development activities.

5. Implementation and Review of the Strategy

A report on all appropriate aspects of the Member Development Strategy and Programme will be presented to and considered by the Member Training and Development Group on an annual basis. The Group will consider the effectiveness of all aspects of the implementation of the Member Development Strategy, its requirements and the need for any modifications. Any revisions which are required will be made following this review and reported to the Fire Authority.

An Implementation Plan for the Strategy has been developed at Appendix 1. The implementation plan will be monitored by the Member Training and Development Group.

6. Outcomes

Following the successful implementation of the Strategy, key outcomes that will be achieved are:

- Highly motivated, trained and developed Members;
- Members possessing the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities within the Fire Authority;
- Equality of opportunity in the delivery of training and development.

Outcomes will be measured through the evaluation and monitoring of both the Strategy and the Member Development programme as detailed in the Strategy. Members Training records and Personal Development Plans will also assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the Member Development Strategy in meeting the key outcomes.

DRAFT

Appendix 1

Member Development – Implementation Plan

The implementation plan will be produced, managed and co-ordinated by the Democratic Services section and will be monitored quarterly by the Member Training and Development Group.

Objective	Key Actions	Responsible Officers	Target Date
1. Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs	1.1 Complete Annual Personal Development Reviews and Development Plans for all Members	People and Development/ Democratic Services	Feb-17 Feb-18
	1.2 Complete an initial Personal Development Review and develop personal development plans for newly elected Members as part of the induction programme	People and Development/ Democratic Services	Jan 17 Jan-18
	1.3 Carry out Training Needs Analysis based on outcomes of PDRs and Members PDPs and develop a programme for delivery of needs based on priorities.	People and Development/ Democratic Services	Mar-17 Mar-18
2. Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members	2.1 Carry out a review of the current PDR process to ensure that it remains effective for experienced and new Members.	People and Development/ Democratic Services	Oct 17
3. Provision of an Annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources.	3.1 Develop Annual Member Development Programme which complements the training needs identified	Democratic Services Manager/Member Training and Development Group (MTDG)	June-17 June-18
	3.2 Review the annual programme to ensure that it aligns with any future changes introduced as part of the national Fire Reform Programme	Democratic Services Manager MTDG	June-17 June-18
	3.2 Produce a quarterly monitoring report on the delivery of the programme for submission to the Member Training and Development Group	Democratic Services Manager	2017 -18 Mar June Sept Dec

Objective	Key Actions	Responsible Officers	Target Date
4. Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members	4.1 Provision of Induction Programme for New Members	Democratic Services Manager	June-17 June-18
	4.2 Provision of Information Pack for New Members (on appointment to Fire Authority)	Democratic Services Manager	June-17 June-18
	4.3 Annually review the Member/Officer Buddy System to ensure it remains effective	Democratic Services Manager MTDG	Sept-17
5. Member Champions	5.1 Review current roles and maximise opportunities for Member Champions to access support networks and development opportunities in line with their specific remit	Democratic Services Manager MTDG	Sept-17
6. Continuous Development	6.1 Produce quarterly monitoring reports in respect of the Strategy's implementation plan for MTDG	Democratic Services Manager	2017 -18 Mar Jun Sept Dec
	6.2 Present an annual report on Member Development activities to the Fire Authority	Democratic Services Manager MTDG	Jun-17 Jun-18
	6.3 Carry out an annual review of MD Strategy	Democratic Services Manager MTDG	Sept -17
	6.4 Carry out a Member satisfaction survey to provide more in-depth feedback on the service provided to Fire Authority Members and inform future development	Democratic Services/ Communications MTDG	Mar-17

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF: HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR: JOANNE SMITH

SUBJECT: TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2017-18

Purpose of Report

1. To provide details of the proposed programme of Member meetings for 2017-18 attached as Appendix 1. Once approved a booklet with all Member meeting dates will be published and distributed to Members.

Recommended: That

- [1] The programme of Member meetings for 2017-18 (attached as Appendix 1) be approved.

Background

2. In accordance with the Authority's Constitution, the programme of meetings for the Fire Authority and all other bodies within the political structure for the following municipal year will be agreed by the Authority no later than its last meeting (December) in each calendar year.

Information

Frequency/Scheduling of Meetings

2017-18 – Timetable of Member Meetings

3. The 2017-18 Timetable of Member (public) meetings has been scheduled to tie in with the relevant dates for budgetary and policy requirements and in accordance with the Fire Authority's standing orders. All of these meetings are held on Wednesday mornings.
4. The timetable includes dates for a number of additional Member meetings including the Members Planning Days which should assist with diary planning for the coming year.
5. Provisional dates for Policy Committee meetings have been included but these are subject to review.

Consultation

6. Consultation has taken place with the Head of Finance to ensure that the dates align with the budgetary framework. Consideration has also been given to other corporate planning and IRMP action plan timelines for 2017-18, where possible.
7. The meetings of NW Fire Control Ltd, North West Fire Forum and the LGA Fire Commission have also been taken into consideration.
8. Constituent authorities will be setting their timetable of meetings early in the New Year and copies of the Fire Authority's approved timetable will be submitted to each authority to inform them of our arrangements.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications for this report.

Legal Implications

10. The Authority is required to give public notice of its meetings and ensure that committee papers are sent to Members within certain timescales in order to fulfil its legal requirements. The timetable will assist the Authority in meeting this requirement.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. There are no equality and diversity implications for this report.

Environmental Implications

12. There are no environmental implications for this report.

CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD

TEL [01606] 868804

BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

APPENDIX 1 -TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2017/18

Cheshire Fire Authority	Policy Committee	Governance and Constitution Committee	Performance and Overview Committee
Wednesdays - 10.30am	Provisional Dates Wednesdays - 10.00am	Wednesdays - 10.00am	Wednesdays - 10.00am
14 June 2017 (annual meeting)	<i>21 June 2017</i>	5 July 2017	
20 September 2017 (sign-off – final accounts and Annual report) (IRMP Consultation)	<i>13 September 2017</i>		6 September 2017
6 December 2017 (Consider outline budget)	<i>22 November 2017</i>	8 November 2017	15 November 2017
14 February 2018 (Approve final budget and IRMP sign-off)	<i>24 January 2018</i>	31 January 2018	7 Feb 2018
25 April 2018		11 April 2018	18 April 2018

ADDITIONAL MEMBER MEETINGS

Members Planning Days: Thursday 13 July and Friday 14th July 2017
Friday 8 September 2017
Friday 10 November 2017
Friday 12 January 2018

Closure of Accounts: (pm) Wednesday 21 June 2017

Risk Management Board: 10am – 12pm: Tuesday 17 October 2017
Tuesday 11 March 2018

Member Training and Development Group: 2pm – 4pm: Thursday 6th July 2017
Thursday 5th October 2017
Thursday 14th December 2017
Thursday 22nd March 2018

Brigade Manager's Pay & Performance Committee: Wednesday 1st November 2017
Wednesday 10th January 2018
Wednesday 28th March 2018

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE : 7TH DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF : HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
AUTHOR : ANDREW LEADBETTER

**SUBJECT : BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION – FURTHER
CHANGE TO SCOPE**

Purpose of Report

1. To propose a further change to the scope of the Blue Light Collaboration (BLC) Programme.

Recommended That Members:

- [1] Agree to remove from the Blue Light Collaboration Programme the creation of a joint vehicle workshop, retaining the facility at Sadler Road and workshop staff as Fire Authority employees.

Background

2. Members agreed changes to the BLC Programme at the Fire Authority meeting in September 2016. Since then there has been further work to develop firm costs associated with the Programme (both for implementation and in respect of revenue savings). This has led officers to conclude that one element of the Programme should be removed from scope. Changes to scope are reserved to the Fire Authority.

Information

3. The BLC Programme includes a requirement to deliver a joint vehicle workshop at the Clemonds Hey site. The existing facility at Clemonds Hey, referred to by the police as the Vehicle Maintenance unit (VMU) does have some spare capacity. However, the VMU is not designed to accommodate the larger vehicles dealt with in the workshop at Sadler Road.
4. There have been a number of meetings involving various advisers and officers which enabled police and fire to establish the requirements associated with a joint vehicle workshop and how it could be developed on the Clemonds Hey site. Initially, it was thought that the VMU building would need to be extended in order for the requirements to be successfully delivered. However, in recent months it was agreed that,

with internal changes only, the VMU could be made to accommodate police and fire. This did involve some compromises.

5. The Business Case which preceded the BLC Programme included implementation costs for the joint vehicle workshop of £1.8m (involving the extension of the VMU building). The revenue savings associated with the joint vehicle workshop were stated to be circa £118k.
6. The current cost of delivering the joint vehicle workshop are anticipated to be approaching £1.7m. The revenue savings associated with the joint workshop are now stated to be in the region of £66k. Unfortunately, this figure is almost certainly overstated because PFI lifecycle costs will have an impact on the overall costs and savings.

Conclusion

7. The joint vehicle workshop would involve some compromises for police and fire.

It would be costly to create and savings, if any, would be minimal. There would be a much extended payback period.

As a result, officers have concluded that the joint vehicle workshop should be removed from the BLC Programme.

Legal Implications

8. The vehicle workshop will be retained at Sadler Road. Staff working in the vehicle workshop will continue to be employed by the Fire Authority.

Financial Implications

9. The figures associated with the joint vehicle workshop appear in the body of the report. Given the overarching fiduciary duty that applies to officers and Members it is difficult to see, given the figures, that it would be appropriate to proceed with the joint vehicle workshop.

Equality & Diversity Implications

10. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this decision.

Environmental Implications

11. Whilst it is arguable that the retention of two vehicle workshops will have an adverse environmental impact, this is not certain.

CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804
BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 2016
REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
AUTHOR: JOANNE SMITH

SUBJECT: EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Recommended:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12 A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated:

Item 11

Proposals Relating to Chester Fire Station

Paragraph

(3) Information relating to the financial or the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

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

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: NONE

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank