



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday, 8 September 2021 at Lecture Theatre - Training Centre, Sadler  
Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Phil Harris, Peter Wheeler, Razia Daniels, Phil Eastty, Gina Lewis, James Nicholas, Jonathan Parry, Norman Wright and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A Recording of Meeting**

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

**B Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies received.

**C Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

**D Notes of Informal Meeting of Members of Performance and Overview Committee**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the notes of the Informal Meeting of Members of Performance and Overview Committee held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021 be noted.**

**2 FINANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1, 2021-22**

The Treasurer introduced the report, which provided Members with a review of the Service's forecast financial performance and information about progress with the 2021-22 capital projects.

He drew Members attention to the forecast revenue spending with the overall position at the first quarter of a forecast overspend of £709k. He outlined how Covid-19 had affected the level of funding from the Cheshire billing authorities with a reduction in business rate grants of £535k. The Treasurer reported that the operational staff pay award of 1.5%, payable from July 2021 amounted to an additional cost of £287k, was not included in the 2021-22 budget, (the full-year equivalent of £383k).

The Treasurer referred Members to Appendix 2, the Movement in Reserves 2021-22, and outlined the proposed movements to and from the reserves.

Members were satisfied with the content of the report and approved the movement in reserves set out in Appendix 2.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the forecast outturn position – Quarter 1 2021-22 be noted; and**

**[2] the movement in reserves as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.**

**3 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1, 2021-22**

The Business Support Manager introduced the report, which provided an update on the Service's Quarter 1 2021-22 performance for each of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The report included the Corporate Scorecard, which reflected the Quarter 1 position against targets set and the year-on-year direction of travel for the KPIs.

The Business Support Manager focussed on the KPIs where targets had not been achieved providing further context to the figures.

- The number of Safe and Well (SaW) visits delivered to properties of Heightened Risk was impacted due to Covid-19 with 2320 completed in Quarter 1. Service Delivery staff were recommencing SaW delivery in October 2021, with a target of 5000 to be completed by end of 2021-22.
- The Thematic Inspections completed by Operational Crews were impacted due to Government Covid restrictions and premises being closed in Quarter 1. The premises that could not be inspected have been scheduled to be inspected over the coming months.
- The target for the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) was missed by one audit. RBIP visits have restarted as a consequence of the lifting of Government restrictions. The missed audit has now taken place.
- The figures for Average Days/Shifts Lost to Sickness are above target and double Quarter 1 figures for last year. The increase was attributed in some part to delays to NHS diagnosis/treatment/ intervention due to Covid-19. The long-term absence figure has been reduced from 25 cases to 5.
- 72 Working Days were Lost to Injury because of three incidents. One incident involving an On-Call fire fighter sustaining an injury during training resulted in 49 days being recorded as lost. The On-Call absence recording methodology was being reviewed to provide a more representative method of reporting. At present it overstates the absence.

- The On-call Availability had decreased from 77% in Quarter 4 to 64% in Quarter 1. The Head of Service Delivery explained that in Quarter 4 lockdown measures meant many on-call staff were working from home or furloughed from their primary employment inflating the on-call availability figure. Quarter 1 coincided with the lifting of travel restrictions, annual leave being taken and long-serving watch managers and crew managers leaving the service.

The Head of Service Delivery described the actions that had been taken to increase availability e.g. the ongoing recruitment programme and the on-call programme team operating from the on-call fire stations.

A Member questioned why the availability of the secondary on-call appliance at Winsford was at 45%. The Head of Service Delivery outlined the struggle with recruitment for secondary appliances generally and a plan was in place at Winsford to recruit operational staff to fill the roles; however, this was a 2-year programme.

A Member requested an update on how Covid-19 was affecting the current staffing figures. The Head of Service Delivery advised that the service had maintained a low figure for staff absence due to rigorous Covid measures. Where Covid cases did occur the outbreak was actively managed and isolation of staff as a precautionary measure was used where possible.

A Member questioned how the long-term sickness had been reduced from 21 cases to 5. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the individual cases were actively managed working with the Occupational Health Unit to assist staff back into the workplace in a supported and managed way.

A Member noted that Cheshire West and Chester had the highest percentage of Automatic Fire Alarms in hospitals and questioned what actions were being taken to rectify this. The Head of Service Delivery advised that regular meetings were held with hospital representatives to try to drive down the false alarm calls.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 1 2021-22 be noted.**

#### **4 PROGRAMME REPORT, QUARTER 1, 2021-22**

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided Members with an update on the Service's programmes and projects. He mentioned the following:

- Chester Fire Station had recently been officially opened. Lessons learnt had been fed back into the other capital projects.
- Crewe Fire Station planning application had now been submitted.
- A joint facility with fire, ambulance and police at Wilmslow is no longer being pursued.

- A long-term plan was being produced for the drone project. Partners continue to offer some drone capability to fire.
- The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme status is red. This is a Government led project and not under CFRS control.
- The Rapid Response Rescue Units are proving difficult to source. However, the first two vehicles are due to be delivered by the end of September.

A Member questioned the role of the Fire Service on speed limits on highways and raised concerns that new housing developments with private driveways did not consider the access for emergency services. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive explained that the Cheshire Road Safety Partnership would feed into the consultation on road speed limits. He advised that the Fire Service was not a statutory consultee on development plans, standards were set by the Local Authority through their Local Development Plans. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer asked Members to share details of any housing developments causing concern. The local fire crew could visit the location to assess any risks.

A Member requested a demonstration of the drone capability. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive advised this would be arranged at the Training Centre when the project was further forward.

A Member requested further information on the work being undertaken by the Road Safety Group. It was agreed that this would be an item on a future Members Planning Day.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 1 2021-22 be noted.**

## **5 SAFETY CENTRAL ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Interim Safety Central Manager introduced the report, which presented a review of the performance of Safety Central between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

She explained the report comprised four key sections to provide an overview of Safety Central's work over the last 12 months; how the team supported the pandemic response, delivery of limited family and school visits during summer 2020, development work and plans for 2021/22.

The Interim Safety Central Manager advised that a targeted marketing campaign had generated more than 131 school bookings for the 2021/22 academic year, 47 of which were new to the centre.

She explained the centre was now open to schools three days a week and from January 2022 all programmes will be re-introduced. 28 volunteers have been

retained with 4 more going through the recruitment process, with the ambition to develop this to 50 volunteers by March 2022.

The Interim Safety Central Manager noted that the Co-op had funded the revamp of the shop scenario.

A Member asked how schools were contacted. The Interim Safety Central Manager advised that emails were sent direct to school heads and that schools were also encouraged to attend using social media and word of mouth.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Safety Central Annual Report 2020-21 be noted.**

## **6 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Equality and Inclusion Officer introduced the report, which provided a summary of key issues covered in the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020-21. He referred Members to the Key Accomplishments from the last six months, in particular:

- The number of female employees had increased from 17% to 19%. With female staff working in operational positions increasing from 7.7% to 9.3%. Cheshire Fire was ranked 6th in the country for female employees in fire and rescue services.
- The Service has recruited more staff from different ethnic backgrounds increasing the figure from 4.1% to 4.3%, with 5% of recent applications coming from people of BAME heritage.
- Work continues on neurodiversity projects to support learning and development, including a new dyslexia assessment tool that has been specifically designed for the fire and rescue sector.
- E-learning modules had been updated and new e-learning packages focusing on Unconscious Bias and Stress Awareness have been launched. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training has been completed throughout the service.

The Director of Transformation advised that a third of applicants for the high potential development scheme were female.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2020-21 be noted.**

## **7 PROSECUTIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Protection Group Manager introduced the report which presented an update on Cheshire Fire Authority's prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform Order 2005 during the financial year 2020-21. Last year there was one successful prosecution.

He outlined the disruption to investigating cases and a backlog in prosecutions due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. There are currently twelve cases in various stages of the prosecution process. These include 1 case awaiting sentencing, 1 case due in magistrate's court, 2 cases at draft summons stage and 8 cases with suspects under investigation.

A Member asked how fast food outlets were engaged with. The Protection Group Manager advised officers have, over recent years, visited more of these businesses to help them reduce risk and comply with regulations.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the contents of this paper be noted; and**
- [2] prosecutions remain on the Performance and Overview Committee future work programme for annual review.**

## **8 NORTH WEST FIRE CONTROL ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

Station Manager Tam Blair introduced the report which provided information about the performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC) during the year 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

He summarised: the current system performance which included information on the availability, faults and speed of the mobilising system; information about call handling and mobilising performance; the cost of the service; staff performance; and business continuity.

A Member questioned if 'what3words' was being used by the Service. The Station Manager advised that it was being used. However, it was a manual process at NWFC.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the North West Fire Control Annual Report 2020-21 be noted.**

## **9 UPG ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

The Head of Service Delivery introduced the report, which provided an update on the initiatives supported and funded by the Unitary Performance Groups (UPGs) during 2020-21.

He reminded Members that the reporting period was affected by the Covid Pandemic causing a decrease in activity and an underspend.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Unitary Performance Groups Annual report 2019-20 be noted.**

**10 FORWARD WORK PLAN 2021-22**

The table included those items that had been identified/agreed to date.

Members requested a report on Climate Change to be brought to the Performance and Overview Committee in February 2022.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Forward Work Programme be noted.**