



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday, 7 September 2022 at Lecture Theatre - Training Centre, Sadler  
Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Phil Harris, Razia Daniels, Gina Lewis, James Nicholas,  
Peter Walker, 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**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wheeler.

**C Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

**D Minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on  
Wednesday 6th July 2022, be confirmed as a correct record.**

**2 FINANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1, 2022-23**

The Treasurer introduced the report, which provided Members with a review of the Service's forecast financial performance and information about progress with the 2022-23 capital projects.

He drew Member's attention to the Forecast Revenue Spending with the overall position at the end of Quarter 1 forecasting an overspend of £68k. He stated that no pay awards for 2022/23 had been agreed. A 3% increase had been included in the budget and if a pay award exceeded this it would have a significant impact.

The Treasurer referred Members to Appendix 2, the Movement in Reserves 2022-23 and outlined the proposed movements to and from the reserves.

A Member asked about progress with the purchase of 9 houses in Wilmslow. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that 5 properties were in the process of being purchased and that work was continuing to identify other potential properties. Hybrid crewing options were also being investigated to enable the project to proceed.

A Member asked how the increased energy costs were affecting the budget. The Treasurer advised Members that the Service had agreements in place for the supply of energy, that the bills were being regularly monitored and that any significant concerns would be reported back to the Authority.

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

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Finance Report – Quarter 1 2022-23 be noted; and**

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

**3 PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1, 2022-23**

The Head of Service Improvement introduced the report, which provided an update on the Service's Quarter 1 2022-23 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 Head of Service Improvement focussed on the KPIs where targets had not been achieved, providing further context.

- The figure for the Number of Deaths in Primary Fires stood at 4 for Quarter 1. Two of the victims were registered on SAFFIRE and the fire investigation reports were being compiled on two of the victims from June. The Safe and Well targeting methodology was under review and this would be incorporated within the Service Improvement Review.
- The Number of Deliberate Primary Fires, 22 of the incidents (41.5%) involved the deliberate ignition of a road vehicle. Of these 10 involved motorcycles, all of which occurred in Runcorn, Warrington and Widnes. The Prevention department and individual crews were working with the police, local authorities, and other partners to reduce the incidents.
- The number of Safe and Well (SaW) visits delivered to properties of Heightened Risk was impacted due to staff shortages within the Prevention department. 4744 SaW visits were completed in Quarter 1, against a target of 7500. The Service is continuing with a recruitment campaign to fill the vacant positions.

- The Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) Quarter 1 target was missed by 59 audits, due to resources being redirected. The missed audits had been arranged for Quarter 2.
- The On-Call Fire Engine Availability was at 53% in Quarter 1 against a target of 85%. The ongoing Fire Cover Review would assess the long-term sustainability of the On-Call model and its conclusions would be reported back to the Fire Authority.

A Member questioned if electric vehicles were more likely to cause fatalities if they were involved in a road traffic accident. The Head of Service Improvement advised that electric vehicles were not any less safe. However, there were more issues to deal with in extinguishing a fire involving an electric vehicle. The Head of Operational Policy and Assurance advised that the North West Region were looking to collaborate to purchase a water skip system to be used to extinguish electrical vehicle fires.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 1, 2022-23 be noted.**

**4 PROGRAMME REPORT, QUARTER 1, 2022-23**

The Head of Service Improvement provided Members with an update on the Service's programmes and projects. He mentioned the following:

- There had been a delay in the temporary fire station being available at Crewe, which was a pre-requisite before the existing fire station could be demolished and replaced. A full update on overall the station modernisation programme would be given at the Members' Planning Day;
- The purchase of the water carrier was now complete and stationed at Crewe for deployment around the county;
- The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme status was red. This is a Government led project and not under CFRS control; and
- In September the first draft of the Road Safety Strategy Plan for Cheshire was due to be issued.

A Member questioned how the Crewe Fire Station build programme was being impacted by the rising build costs. The Treasurer advised that an additional £375k had been allocated and included in the build contract. This was intended to protect the Authority from certain cost increases associated with the project. Regular project team meetings were taking place, with costs being closely monitored.

A Member asked how On-Call was impacted by the migration of On-Call firefighters to Wholetime positions. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that migration did affect On-Call. However migration was encouraged as it was a key route into a Wholetime role with dual roles helping to support the On-Call system.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Programme Report – Quarter 1 2022-23 be noted.**

**5 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 1, 2022-23**

Charles Black, Principal Auditor from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), was in attendance to present the Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 1, 2022-23

He drew Members' attention to the key messages:-

- the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) Briefing Report had been issued
- the Business Continuity Planning Draft Report was in progress
- two audits (Blue Light Collaboration and Microsoft 365) had been deferred until Quarter 4, January 2023.

Charles Black advised that the plan was on track and no concerns were brought to Members' attention.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 1 2022-23 be noted.**

**6 SAFETY CENTRAL ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

The Safety Central Manager introduced the report, which presented a review of the performance of Safety Central between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022.

She explained the report was briefer in format due to the closure of the Centre during the Covid Pandemic and the phased re-introduction of the Centre's activity during 2021/22.

The Safety Central Manager outlined the changes to the staffing team and the engagement of the volunteers throughout the year. 23 volunteers had been retained with 1 more going through the recruitment process. A priority for 2022 was the recruitment of further volunteers.

She explained the performance figures for visiting schools and those schools identified within the top 10% and 20% of the multiple deprivation index (MDI) within Cheshire.

A Member asked how volunteers were recruited. The Safety Central Manager advised that recruitment was done through many channels, using social media, recruitment events, open days at the Centre, radio and word of mouth. A Member suggested the CFRS Step Away programme could be used to encourage volunteers from staff about to retire.

A Member asked why there were no schools falling within the MDI booked into the Centre from within the Cheshire West and Chester area. The Safety Central Manager advised that they would have been contacted; however, they had not booked yet. It was agreed that the Members would be sent a list of the schools that had booked so that they could promote the Centre to those that had yet to take up the offer. It was also noted that Councils had a discretionary budget which could be used to help with the transport costs if this was a barrier preventing a school visit.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Safety Central Annual Report 2021-22 be noted.**

## **7 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

The Head of Communications and Engagement introduced the report, which provided a summary of key issues covered in the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2021-22. He stated that Benji Evans, had now left the Service and the position of Equality & Inclusion Officer was being advertised.

The Head of Communications and Engagement referred Members to the Key Accomplishments, in particular:

- the Service achieved second place in the Stonewall Top 100 Workplace Equality Index (WEI), it's highest-ever ranking, and retained its position as the UK's most inclusive emergency service;
- the Service had seen a slight increase in ethnic diversity amongst its staff. Non-White British staff now make up 4.7% of the workforce, compared to 4.3% in 2021;
- 3.4% of the Service's employees declare a disability, which was a slight increase on 2.9% last year;
- strengthening of staff networks including, Limitless Women's Network, the Race Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Network, and the Neurodiversity Network;

A Member questioned how the Service supports staff who are transitioning. The Head of Communications and Engagement advised that the Trans Guidance and the Service's LGBT+ allies booklet had been updated and there was clear guidance on transitioning within the manager's handbook to enable managers to support staff at every stage.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2021-22 be noted.**

## **8 PROSECUTIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

The Protection Group Manager introduced the report which presented an update on Cheshire Fire Authority's prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 during the financial year 2021-22. Last year there was one successful prosecution.

There were currently eight cases in various stages of the prosecution process. These include 3 cases going to trial in the Crown Court, 1 case due in the Magistrate's Court and 4 cases with individuals under investigation.

The Protection Group Manager summarised the successful prosecution case of the owner of Mr Pizza in Crewe.

A Member observed that the prosecution had taken 3 years and asked if this was typical. The Protection Group Manager advised that there had been disruption to investigating cases and a backlog in prosecutions due to the Covid Pandemic. It was also possible that fire safety may not be one of the highest priority areas for the courts, which appeared to be under pressure.

A Member questioned if the Service worked with local authorities on houses of multiple usage. The Protection Group Manager advised that such properties engaged dual enforcement; a local authority would have the jurisdiction for private areas and the Service would have authority over the commercial areas.

### **RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the contents of the Prosecutions Annual Report 2021-22 be noted.**

## **9 NORTH WEST FIRE CONTROL ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

A Station Manager, who acted as the Single Point of Contract with North West Fire Control introduced the report which provided information about the performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC) during the year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

He summarised the call handling performance comparing 2020-21 and 2021-22, which showed a rise of 19% in the number of calls. This increase was in part due to Covid Pandemic creating a false reduction in calls in 2020- 21 e.g. due to the impact of lockdown.

The two incident types seeing the biggest increases were Road Traffic Collisions up 64.8% (147 incidents) and NWAS Gain Entry incidents, up 41.1% (67 incidents).

The Station Manager outlined new technology that was being utilised by NWFC; 999eye, a technical solution where NWFC could use a caller's smart mobile phone to view the incident being reported; Rapid Rescue Response Units went live at NWFC in June; Fire Survival Guidance power app, an electronic solution to enhance CFRS and NWFC ability to co-ordinate major incidents for example, high-rise fires

where there were multiple calls received at NWFC; and LifeX, an upgraded telephony system to identify a caller's location down to 1 metre.

A Member questioned if the new technology could be a hindrance if NWFC received multiple calls for the same incident. The Station Manager advised that the technology was used to enhance the information and it does not prevent the initial mobilisation and was not used to downgrade an incident. When NWFC receives multiple calls for the same incident this was managed in the room by a team leader and they were well trained to interpret the information being received.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the North West Fire Control Annual Report 2021-22 be noted.**

**10 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE 6 MONTH UPDATE REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2022**

The Environment and Sustainability Lead, Joint Corporate Services introduced the report, which provided an update on the progress that was being made by the Service in relation to the environment and climate change agenda.

The report showed a reduction of 59% of carbon emissions from the 2017 baseline.

A Member questioned if battery storage connected to a photovoltaic system was worth the cost. The Environment and Sustainability Lead advised that it was very beneficial because in certain areas, not all the self-generated power could be returned to the grid. The stored energy could be used during periods when no power was being generated by the system.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Environment and Climate Change 6 Month Update Report, September 2022 be noted.**

**11 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23**

The table included those items that had been identified/agreed to date. On this occasion the plan was not altered and no items were added.

**RESOLVED: That**

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