



**Wednesday,
24 April 2024
10.30 am**

**Meeting of
Cheshire Fire Authority
Sadler Road
Winsford
CW7 2FQ**

Contact Officer:
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Democratic Services

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Cheshire Fire Authority

Notes for Members of the Public

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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, the Agenda and individual reports are available on the Authority's website (www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

The Agenda is usually divided into two parts. Most business is dealt with in the first part which is open to the public. On some occasions some business may need to be considered in the second part of the agenda, in private session. There are limited reasons which allow this to take place, e.g. as confidential information is being considered about an individual, or commercial information is being discussed.

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MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 2024

Time: 10.30 am

**Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford,
Cheshire CW7 2FQ**

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 to disclose any interests that are relevant to any item on the Agenda.

1E Questions from Members of the Public

To receive any questions submitted, in accordance with procedure rules 4.47 to 4.54 by members of the public within the area covered by the Fire Authority.

1F Minutes of Fire Authority

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Fire Authority Meeting held on 14th February 2024.

(Pages 5 - 12)

1G Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee

To receive, for information, the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee meeting held on 6th March 2024.

(Pages 13 - 18)

1H 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 18th March 2024.

(Pages 19 - 20)

1I Minutes of Governance and Constitution Committee

To receive, for information, the minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee meeting held on 17th April 2024.

(To Follow)

- 1J Minutes of Audit Committee** (To Follow)
To receive, for information, the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 17th April 2024.
- 1K Notes of the Member Training and Development Group** (Pages 21 - 26)
To receive, for information, the notes of the Member Training and Development Group meeting held on 26th March 2024.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

- 2 Statement of Assurance 2023-24** (Pages 27 - 48)
- 3 Review of Member Training and Development 2023-24 and Member Training and Development Programme 2024-25** (Pages 49 - 72)
- 4 2023-24 Staff Engagement Forum** (Pages 73 - 76)
- 5 Sale of Houses in Stockton Heath** (Pages 77 - 78)

PART 2 - BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED IN PRIVATE

None



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY held on Wednesday, 14 February 2024 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors Stef Nelson (Chair), Sherin Akhtar, Rachel Bailey, David Brown, John Bird, Kath Buckley, Steve Collings, Peter Coan, Razia Daniels, Brian Gallagher, Phil Harris, Marilyn Houston, Gina Lewis, Karen Mundry, Rob Polhill, Margaret Simon, Laura Smith and Peter Wheeler

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 Nick Mannion, Robert Moreton, Stuart Parker, Peter Walker and Norman Wright.

C Chair's Announcements

The Chair asked Members to note the content of the Chair's announcements which included details of Authority achievements and events Members had attended since the last meeting of the Fire Authority.

The Chair advised that there had been a national request from the Home Office to support the further donation of appliances and equipment to the Ukraine. The Service had donated appliances and equipment on three previous occasions and the Home Office was looking for the Service's continued support. Officers had identified three fire engines which it had offered for donation. The vehicles were not in operational use and therefore their donation would not impact upon service provision, nor compromise the safety of firefighters. The three vehicles were at the end of their serviceable life and were earmarked to be scrapped within the next 12 months. The value of the vehicles was low, and the donation had been approved by officers.

The Chair advised that this would be Paul Vaughan, the Treasurer's, last meeting as he was due to retire at the end of February. The Chair on behalf of Members took the opportunity to thank Paul for his all his work and commitment he had given to the Service over the years and wished him all the best on his retirement.

D Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

E Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions submitted.

F Minutes of Fire Authority

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 6th December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

G Minutes of Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 1st December 2023 be noted.

H Minutes of Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee held on 22nd January 2024 be noted.

I Minutes of Audit Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 24th January 2024 be noted.

J Notes of Local Pension Board - Firefighters Pension Scheme

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Local Pension Board – Firefighters Pension Scheme held on 5th December 2023 be noted.

K Notes of the Member Training and Development Group

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Member Training and Development Group held on 12th December 2023 be noted.

2 COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024-28

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive introduced the report which sought Members' approval of the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 (CRMP 2024-28).

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and the Engagement and Public Affairs Manager guided Members through the item, including the cover report which contained information about the consultation process, consultation feedback and independent support provided in relation to consultation.

The development of the draft CRMP 2024-28, and the associated fire cover review, were informed by a comprehensive programme of public and staff pre-consultation. Member had been provided with a summary as well as full details of the feedback received through the consultation process. These was attached as appendices to the report.

Members welcomed the work which had taken place during the consultation process and the efforts which had taken place to ensure that both the public and staff understood the proposals.

A Member asked how the comments raised about the on-call duty system from staff would be taken forward to assist in improving recruitment and conditions. In response, the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive advised that the comments raised would be taken forward by the Project Manager. A working group would be formed that would include trade union representatives. The aim was to work together to form a pilot. However, firefighter pay was a national issue.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank all those who had been involved in the formation of the CRMP 2024-28.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the feedback referred to in the report and appendices be noted;**
- [2] the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 be approved; and**
- [3] the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive be authorised to make final drafting amendments to the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 prior to publication on 1st April 2024.**

3 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024-25

The Head of People and Organisational Development presented the report which sought approval to publish the Pay Policy Statement for 2024-25, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Members were advised that, under the Localism Act 2011, all local authorities were required to publish a pay policy statement on an annual basis. The document set

out the Authority's policies for the financial year relating to the remuneration of its Chief Officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees, and the relationship between the pay of Chief Officers and that of other employees. The requirement was intended to increase transparency and accountability, and to give local people access to information to allow them to determine whether pay was appropriate.

Paragraphs 9 to 12 of the report provided an overview of changes to the Pay Policy Statement since last year. Changes included: the Living Wage being reviewed and adjusted every October; re-employment being allowed subject to key criteria being met along with compliance with pension and tax rules; the relationship between the remuneration of Chief Officers and other employees.

A Member asked about the timeframe from when a person retiring from the Service can be re-employed in a different position. In response, the Head of People and Organisational Development advised that the timeframe would depend on the specific role and circumstances of the individual. The Service had robust policies and procedures in place that would be following in these circumstances.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Pay Policy Statement 2024-25, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and**
- [2] the Head of People and Organisational Development, in conjunction with the Director of Governance, be authorised to make any necessary in-year changes to the Pay Policy Statement as necessitated by new legislation or guidance.**

4 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024-25

The Head of Finance presented a report that sought approval of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25 (the Strategy). This was a requirement of the Local Government Act 2003, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUGC) Investment Guidance, DLHUGC Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Guidance, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The Strategy comprised of four main elements, namely:-

- Capital Expenditure Plans and Prudential Indicators
- Borrowing Strategy and Prudential Limits
- Annual Investment Strategy
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement

The Head of Finance referred Members to Table 7 of the Strategy, the operational boundary and Table 8, the authorised limit for external debt. These were the two key prudential indicators that set the maximum limit for external debt based on the capital programme and the current borrowing requirements. The authorised limit in Table 8 could not be exceeded without approval.

The Head of Finance provided an update on Treasury Management limits on activity. Table 9 referred to the three debt-related treasury activity limits. Their purpose was to retain borrowing activity within certain limits, to manage risk and reduce the impact of adverse movement of interest rates. Since the last report the upper limits on shorter term debt had been raised to enable the Authority to manage high interest rate risk, through short term borrowing until PWLB long term rates fall.

RESOLVED: That:

- [1] the Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25 be approved; and**
- [2] the Authority's Prudential Indicators including the Authorised Limit (paragraph 5.2.7 of the Strategy) be approved.**

5 2024-25 BUDGET (PRECEPT) CONSULTATION

The Engagement and Public Affairs Manager presented a report that provided details about the Budget (Precept) Consultation.

The consultation was carried out online and ran from 5th to 26th January 2024 and was in the form of an online survey and asked to what extent respondents supported the Authority's proposed increase in precept of 2.99% for 2024-25.

A total of 448 respondents took part in the consultation. 65.18% of respondents expressed support for the proposed increase, compared to 23.21% who opposed. A further 11.61% of respondents either stated they neither supported nor opposed the increase or did not know. Consultees were able to provide free text comments and 216 comments were provided.

Members welcomed the generally positive feedback that had been received and felt that this provided reassurance that respondents largely supported the proposed increase in precept for 2024-25.

A Members asked if the responses detailed in the 'Consultation Feedback Report'; attached as at Appendix 1 of the report could be broken down into unitary areas. In response, the Engagement and Public Affairs Manager, advised that the figures provided could be broken down further if required.

Members took the opportunity to thank respondents who took the time to complete the online survey.

RESOLVED:

- [1] the responses to the Consultation be considered when determining the Council Tax Precept for 2024-25.**

6 2024-25 BUDGET; COUNCIL TAX PRECEPT; AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-29

The Finance Officer presented a report that sought Members' approval for the Authority's budget for 2023-24, the Authority's precept, as required by law, for 2024-25 and its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024-29.

The Authority was required to approve its budget and set the council tax precept for the financial year commencing 1st April 2024. The Authority was required to take into account Government funding, precept regulations and organisational demands. This requirement was supported by the production of a MTFP with the annual budget forming the first year of the MTFP. The creation and maintenance of the MTFP was fundamental in promoting good financial planning and delivery of value for money. The MTFP was Appendix 1 to the report.

Members had considered the Authority's financial position at their Planning Day on 12th January 2024 where they had the opportunity to challenge the assumptions and proposals being put forward by officers as part of the draft budget and MTFP.

The Finance Officer indicated that the report followed a similar format to those that had been presented in previous years.

The 2024-25 budget proposals were based on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement as published on 18th December 2023 and the final Settlement announced on 5th February 2024. The Settlement included the Government's Funding Assessment and grant allocations for 2024-25. An increase in council tax precept of 2.99% at Band D was assumed; this would generate additional funding of £1.420k compared to 2023-24, based on the tax bases of Band D equivalent properties. When all elements of funding were included, such as revenue support grant and business rate income, the overall net revenue budget would increase by £4.735k compared to the previous year, including a 2024-25 Service Grant (including the Funding Guarantee) of £946k.

A Member referred to the Modernisation Programme and asked for clarity that the fire station rebuilds at Ellesmere Port and Warrington would be complete by 2028. In response, the Finance Officer confirmed that a provisional 'placeholders' for the fire station rebuilds were included across the years 2026-28. They would be funded through a mix of capital receipts, reserves and further borrowing.

Members made several comments relating to the McCloud Remedy the timescales involved and the risks associated and how these could affect the Service. In response, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that all primary and secondary legislation to implement the McCloud Remedy came into force on 1st October 2023. Services had to complete several key tasks in readiness to deliver the Remedy. The next group of key deliverables needed to be completed between October 2023 and April 2024.

The Finance Officer advised that the Home Office had clarified that any costs incurred by Services in relation to additional pension liabilities and compensation would be fully funded by Central Government.

Members were advised that the pensions issue relating to the McCloud Remedy had been considered at last meeting of the Audit Committee and Local Pension Board – Firefighter Pension Scheme.

Members welcomed the informative report and thanked officers for their time in preparing such a detailed accessible report.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Medium Term Financial Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;**
- [2] the Budget Requirement of £56.479m as set out in Table 1, paragraph 11 of the report be agreed, taking into account the adjustments for inflation, growth, one off items and savings as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report;**
- [3] the proposed council tax precept increase of £2.61 at Band D (2.99%) be approved and a Band D council tax precept of £90.09 be set for 2024-25;**
- [4] the levels of council tax precept as set out in Table 2 paragraph 30 of the report be agreed;**
- [5] the proposed capital programme for 2024-25 set out in Table 2 paragraph 30 of the report together with its associated financing be approved;**
- [6] the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix 3 of the report be approved;**
- [7] the Reserves Strategy set out in Appendix 4 of the report be approved;**
- [8] the Statement of Robustness of Estimates set out in Appendix 5 of the report be noted; and**
- [9] the Financial Health Targets as set out in paragraph 35 of the report be adopted.**

7 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024-28

The Head of Communications and Engagement presented a report that sought approval of an External Communications and Engagement Strategy for the Service. The draft Strategy set out a series of objectives to strengthen the way in which the Service would communicate and engage with the public and external stakeholders over the next four years.

The draft Strategy aimed to provide a framework for the way in which the Service would talk, listen and respond to the public and its external stakeholders during the lifespan of the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the External Communications and Engagement Strategy be approved.



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford CW7 2FQ at 10.00 am.**

PRESENT: Councillors Phil Harris (Chair), Steve Collings, Razia Daniels, Nick Mannion, Rob Moreton (Substitute), James Nicholas, Margaret Simon, Peter Wheeler, 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 John Bird (Substitute Councillor Rob Moreton).

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 22nd November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 FINANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2023-24

The Treasurer introduced the report, which provided Members with a review of the Service's forecast financial outturn and reported on progress against 2023-24 capital projects.

He referred Members to the anticipated underspend of £114k for the full year. The underspend forecast was in spite of the national pay awards for Grey and Green Book staff being above the budgeted sum.

The Treasurer advised Members that the capital financing had delivered a significant saving which was to be transferred to reserves to help fund future capital expenditure. The savings had been accrued due to higher interest rates received on bank deposits, the station modernisation programme requiring less expenditure due to the slowdown in the projects, and saving on interest payments on loans.

The Treasurer drew Members attention to Table 1, the Outturn Analysis and detailed analysis of all the expenditure in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Finance Report – Quarter 3, 2023-24 and forecast outturn position be noted.

3 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2023-24

The Group Manager for Organisational Performance and Planning introduced the report, which provided an update on the Service's Quarter 3, 2023-24 performance for each of the Service's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

He drew Members attention to the Corporate Performance Scorecard and focussed on:

- the number of Deaths in Primary Fires which had risen to 6. The HM Coroner was yet to determine the cause of 2 of the deaths;
- the number of Safe and Well Visits was on target for completing 20,000 by the end of Quarter 4. 19,557 had been completed by the end of Quarter 3;
- the number of Fires in Non-Domestic Premises was above target, this was due to the number of incidents in prisons. It was noted that although the number of fires had increased, the severity of fires had not and that the fire were predominantly limited to the item first ignited; and
- the Number of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) in Non-Domestic Premises was 100 above the target. The Service set a challenging target for AFAs and 79% of calls were challenged against a national average of 38%.

A Member questioned whether any of the buildings recorded in the figure for Fires in Non-Domestic premises were empty units. The Group Manager advised that most buildings were operational, a building was recorded as derelict if it had been shut for over 2 years, or if it was clearly dilapidated.

A Member questioned why other Services were not call challenging alarm activations if Cheshire challenges 79% when the national average was 38%. The Chief Fire Officer advised that other Services had a differing level of risk to Cheshire and that the Service had not seen an increase in fires within Non-Domestic Properties because of the decision made. He advised Members that resources had been deployed more productively, for example attending forced entry jobs for partner agencies.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 3, 2023-24 be noted.

4 PROGRAMME REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2023-24

The Corporate Programme Manager provided Members with an update on the Service's programmes and projects (including those contained within the Authority's annual IRMP action plan). He highlighted that there were two indicators that were amber, the Fire Station Modernisation – Year 3, and the Prevention Department Review.

He advised that the Fire Station Modernisation Programme had suffered delays at Congleton due to inclement weather in the last few months. The Prevention Department Review was now expected to be signed off by the end of March.

The Corporate Programme Manager provided Members with an update on the status of the Service's IRMP 2020-2024 projects. He advised Members that most of the projects had been completed. A couple of projects would form part of the new CRMP programme for 2024-28 and two projects were yet to start as they were waiting for a national decision.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Programme Report – Quarter 3, 2023-24 be noted.

5 BONFIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Deliberate Fire Reduction Manager introduced the report, which summarised the preventative and operational activities of the Service and partners during the bonfire period 24th October 2023 to 7th November 2023.

He advised that the Service attended 31 Small Deliberate Fires during the 2023 bonfire period, in comparison with 57 Small Deliberate Fires during the 2022 bonfire period.

The Deliberate Fire Reduction Manager drew Members attention to the preventative work carried out by the Service in the lead up to the bonfire period. This included working with local authorities to manage the reporting and removal of waste. He outlined the targeted approach to education and corporate communication used by the Service. The Service worked in partnership with Cheshire Police to advise prevention messages at several schools, community centres and other locations throughout Cheshire.

The Deliberate Fire Reduction Manager reported that there was 1 reported attack on operational crews during the bonfire period, compared to 6 in 2022. The incident involved objects being thrown and the use of laser pens. He advised Members that no injuries were sustained by the crew.

Members congratulated the Service on their proactive approach to fire reduction and the year-on-year decrease in the amount of Small Deliberate Fires recorded.

A Member raised the issue of the people causing a nuisance by igniting large commercial fireworks in inappropriate places and times. The Deliberate Fire Reduction Manager advised Members that this was an issue that would be looked at during the 2024 period.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Bonfire Report 2023 and recommendations be noted.

6 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Corporate Programme Manager introduced the report, which provided an update on the progress that was being made by the Service concerning the environment and climate change agenda.

He highlighted the following key points from the report:

- the carbon emissions report for April 2022 until March 2023 reported a reduction of 59% from a 2017 baseline;
- 50 colleagues had been certified as Carbon Literate during 2023;
- the Service maintains 100% landfill free waste;
- during 2023 all the historical electric vehicle infrastructure on the estate was upgraded in line with new regulations; and
- the Environment Group were working on the Service's next 5-year strategy.

A Member queried whether the Service had a plan for replacing the diesel fire engines with a greener option. The Chief Fire Officer commented that Services around the country were exploring the options of electric fire engines. However, they were 3 to 4 times the cost and there were still operational issues with them. The Service works on a 15-year replacement for each fire engine and greener options would be considered as they become available.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Environment and Climate Change Annual Report 2023 be noted.

7 NFCC FIRE STANDARDS COMPLIANCE REPORT

The Group Manager for Organisational Performance and Planning introduced the report which provided an update on the Service's current compliance and progress in implementing the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Fire Standards.

The Group Manager updated Members on the Services current level of compliance with each of the published Fire Standards. He advised that if a single task was marked as non-compliant or partially compliant then the whole criteria was marked as non or partially compliant.

The Group Manager informed Members that the National Fire Standards Board were visiting the Service in April to discuss the reporting issues. The Fire Standards do not align with the criteria used by HMICFRS for their inspections.

A Member requested an update be given to Members after the visit by the National Fire Standards Board. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that an update on the Fire Standards and the Code of Ethics Spotlight Report would be presented at a future Member Planning Day.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the NFCC Fire Standards Compliance Report be reported annually and that the report be noted.

8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Governance commented that no changes or additions to the Forward Work Programme had been identified.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] the Forward Work Programme be noted.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BRIGADE MANAGERS' PAY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held on Monday, 18 March 2024 at POs Conference Room - Fire Service HQ, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors Stef Nelson (Chair), Gina Lewis, Rob Moreton, Karen Mundry, Stuart Parker, Margaret Simon and Peter Wheeler

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

B Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

C Minutes of the Brigades Managers' Pay and Performance Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee held on 22nd January 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That:

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 2 – Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive: Performance Appraisal and Development Scheme

Paragraph 1 - Information relating to an individual.

3 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Independent HR Consultant which outlined the Performance Appraisal and Development Scheme [PADS] that enabled the Service to review an employee's performance against delivery of agreed

priorities/objectives, grade the contribution and performance, identify individual and organisational development needs, and support succession planning.

The PADS scheme operates from top to bottom across the whole of the Service. Members monitor progress against the key objectives set for the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, which are aligned to the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (soon to be the Community Risk Management Plan).

Members reviewed the performance of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive against the key objectives set for 2023-24.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive's final appraisal for this year was due to take place on 8th July 2024 when a review of the year would take place and new objectives agreed for the remainder of 2024-25.

RESOLVED That:

- [1] progress against the key objectives for 2023-24 be noted; and**
- [2] the final review for 2023-24 take place on 8th July 2024 and new objectives will be set for the remainder of 2024-25 (up to 31st March 2025).**



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at Remote Meeting via Teams at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors Karen Mundry and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Laura Smith, Kath Buckley, Peter Coan and Rob Moreton.

2 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That

[1] the notes from the previous meeting on Tuesday 12th December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2022-24 - IMPLEMENTATION - QUARTERLY MONITORING

The Governance Officer presented the report on the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 Quarterly Monitoring, updating Members on progress made against the Implementation Plan for the quarter. She provided an update in each of the objectives that were included in the Strategy.

Objective 3 – Provision of an Annual Member Development Programme

Further discussion was held during Item 4 – Member Development Programme 2023-24 – Quarterly Monitoring.

Objective 4 – Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members

Further discussion was held during Item 8 – Discussion Item - Proposals for 2024-25 Member Development and Induction Programme.

Objective 5 – Member Champions

Further discussion was held during Item 7 – Discussion Item – Review of the Member Champion Arrangements.

Objective 6 – Continuous Development

Further discussion was held during Item 6 – Discussion Paper: Member Satisfaction Survey 2023-24.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 Implementation – Quarterly Monitoring be noted.

4 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2023-24 - QUARTERLY MONITORING

The Governance Officer presented a quarterly update on the Member Development Programme for 2023-24. She advised that Members were invited to attend two Member Planning Day sessions and had the opportunity to virtually attend a webinar on fire risks associated with lithium batteries.

It was also reported that all Members also had the opportunity to visit their local fire station but there had been no uptake to-date. A Member queried why the invite had received no responses. The Governance Officer stated that there were no responses to the initial email however, it was not to say that Members had not arranged their own visits to local stations through UPG meetings or their officer buddy. A Member advised that she had a tour of fire stations on the rise of UPG meetings.

It was suggested that the Leadership Development Advisor could ask Members during their Personal Development interviews whether they had visited their local fire station, and if not could one be arranged.

A Member also queried whether there was an official opening of the newly constructed Crewe Fire Station. It was noted that a group visit would benefit Members.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the progress on the delivery of the Member Development Programme 2023-24 be noted; and

[2] the Governance Officer arrange a member visit to the new Crewe Fire Station.

5 DRAFT MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP REVIEW 2023-24

The Governance Officer presented the draft review which considered Member training and development activities undertaken throughout the municipal year. The report contained an overview of the progress against the objectives of the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 and feedback from training and development sessions.

The final report was due to be considered by the Fire Authority on Wednesday 24th April 2024. Members were satisfied with the content of the report.

RECOMMENDED: That

[1] subject to minor amendments, the Draft Review of Member Training and Development 2023-24 be approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 24th April 2024.

6 DISCUSSION ITEM - MEMBER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2023-24

The Governance Officer introduced the discussion item on the Member Satisfaction Survey for 2023-24. She advised that unlike the survey from previous years, a new section on the performance of the Governance department had been included as part of consultation feedback for the Governance departmental review. Feedback was requested from the Group on the proposed questions and delivery of the survey.

Members were satisfied with the proposed questions. The Leadership Development Advisor suggested that the survey could be produced via Slido. Members were receptive to use Slido and officers agreed to explore the survey and review its effectiveness for the collation of data.

It was also agreed that the survey would be ready for Cheshire Fire Authority meeting on Wednesday 24th April 2024 to encourage a high completion rate. Any Members that had not returned their completed survey at the meeting would be asked to complete the survey virtually.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the proposed questions for the Member Satisfaction Survey 2023-24 be approved; and

[2] the Member Satisfaction Survey 2023-24 be produced for the Cheshire Fire Authority meeting on Wednesday 24th April 2024.

7 DISCUSSION ITEM - REVIEW OF THE MEMBER CHAMPION ARRANGEMENTS

The Governance Officer introduced the discussion item which enabled Members to provide feedback on the existing arrangements for the Member Champions. She advised the feedback from the group would be included within the formal review completed by the Governance and Constitution Committee.

Members provided their feedback following the item on Member Champion activity that was presented at the Member Planning Day held on Friday 22nd March 2024. It was noted that the presentation was well received. However, there was a variance in the length and detail of some of the activity summaries. It was suggested that officers could produce a template to assist Members when completing their activity

summaries.

A Member queried whether the Authority had a champion for contingency and emergency. He noted the importance of business continuity following the recent events of the pandemic and Manchester Arena bombing. The Governance Officer advised that the Chair; Deputy Chair; Group Spokespersons; and Lead Members formed the Business Continuity Committee. It was part of the Business Continuity Committee's responsibilities to introduce, monitor and review contingency planning arrangements in the event of disruptions to the delivery of the service.

RECOMMENDED: That

[1] the feedback provided by the Group be considered by the Governance and Constitution Committee during their review of the Member Champions Arrangements.

8 DISCUSSION ITEM - PROPOSALS FOR 2024-25 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND INDUCTION PROGRAMME

The Governance Officer introduced the discussion item which provided a summary of the proposals for the new Member induction. The Group discussed the three aspects of the new Member induction: the welcome pack, including the Member Induction Handbook; induction activities; and meetings with officer buddies.

Officers advised that all-out local elections in Warrington Borough Council were taking place this year, and there was at least one Member officially retiring from being a councillor this year. Therefore, it was expected that there would be some new Members joining the Fire Authority for 2024-25. Members commented that although there were benefits to an induction session held in person, it needed to be practical and would not be suitable for only one new Member. It was proposed an induction session would be provisionally organised and only confirmed once the Service received confirmation of seat allocations from the unitary authorities.

The Group provided positive feedback to the officers on the proposals within the discussion item. It was noted that the welcome pack contained relevant information and Member Induction Handbook was a helpful tool. The Governance Officer advised that the Handbook was in the process of being updated and was expected to be distributed in time for the first Fire Authority meeting of 2024-25.

The Governance and Corporate Planning Manager requested suggestions on topics for webinars that could take place in the Member Development Programme for 2024-25. A Member suggested that the winner of the IFE Lecturette competition could present their winning presentation to all Fire Authority members.

RESOLVED: That

[1] officers continue with the proposed arrangements for new Fire Authority member induction for 2024-25; and

- [2] officers schedule a webinar on the winning presentation of the IFE Lecturette competition within the Member Development Programme 2024-25.**

9 DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25

The Governance Officer presented the draft Work Programme of the Member Training and Development Group for 2024-25. Members noted the content for upcoming meetings and were satisfied with the virtual format.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Work Programme for 2024-25 for the Member Training and Development Group be approved.**

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CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 24TH APRIL 2024
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2023-24

Purpose of Report

1. To present Members with the Statement of Assurance 2023-24 for approval.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Approve the Statement of Assurance 2023-24, authorising the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive to make any updates/final changes to the document before it is published.

Background

2. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 (the Framework) requires fire and rescue authorities to publish a Statement of Assurance (the Statement).
3. The Framework says that the Statement should:

“...outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard... to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan ... prepared by the authority for that period. The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters.”
4. The guidance on the Statement indicates that existing assessment processes might feed into the Statement in order to avoid duplication and the draft Statement contains a summary of, and links to, various other documents.
5. The Governance and Constitution Committee will consider the draft Statement of Assurance 2023-24 on 17th April 2024 and Members will be notified of any changes/improvements suggested by the Committee.

Information

6. The Statement of Assurance for 2023-24 is attached to this report as Appendix 1. It has been prepared in accordance with national guidance. It includes sections on financial assurance, governance and operational assurance. It also outlines the way in which the Authority has had regard to the Framework. There is also a section on His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

7. The guidance about the preparation of a statement suggests that where authorities have already set out relevant information that is clear, accessible, and user-friendly within existing documents they may wish to include extracts or links to these documents within their statement. The Statement includes extracts or links to many of the existing key documents and policies such as the Integrated Risk Management Plan, the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of Accounts.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

9. Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. Paragraph 4.6 of the current Framework requires each fire and rescue authority to produce an annual Statement of Assurance.
10. The Statement will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
11. The Statement should be signed off by an elected member of the Fire Authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents. The Chair of the Authority will be asked to sign the Statement, together with the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. They formally declare that they are satisfied that the arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements of the Framework.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. There are none.

Environmental Implications

13. There are none.

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PLANNING
MANAGER
TEL [01606] 868804**

APPENDIX 1 – STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2023-24



Draft Statement of Assurance

.....
www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

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1. Foreword

Cheshire Fire Authority recognises the importance of having good management, effective processes, and appropriate controls in place to deliver services to the communities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.

Fire authorities are accountable for their performance and should be open to evaluation by the communities they serve. By producing this Statement of Assurance, we aim to provide information to communities, government, local authorities and other partners which will allow them to make a valid assessment of our performance

Overall, we are satisfied that the Authority's financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements detailed within the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Cllr Stef Nelson
Chair
Cheshire Fire Authority



Alex Waller
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service



2. Introduction

The Statement of Assurance is published annually to provide an easy and accessible way for communities, government, local authorities and partners to make a valid assessment of the Authority's performance and governance arrangements.

The Authority is required to publish an annual Statement of Assurance as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Fire and Rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual Statement of Assurance.

The Statement of Assurance may include any potential improvements the Authority has identified across its accounting, governance or operational responsibilities and any plans to achieve the improvements.

National guidance on the content of Statements of Assurance suggests that where authorities have already set out relevant information that is clear, accessible and user friendly within existing documents, they may wish to include extracts or links to these documents within their Statement of Assurance. This Statement includes extracts or links to key documents, where relevant.

Key evidence links

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018](#)
[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 - Compliance Report \(Performance and Overview Committee 04.09.2019\)](#)

3. Financial Assurance

The Authority is responsible for ensuring public money is properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively.

Annual Statement of Accounts

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

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring the right controls are in place to ensure that financial assets are properly managed, financial reporting is accurate and that the Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with statutory requirements.

Annual Governance Statement

The [Annual Governance Statement](#), which is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 and which is published as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts, sets out the systems and procedures that are in place to ensure that the Authority's resources are used in accordance with the law and provide best value for the taxpayer.

Transparency

In addition to the statutory requirement to publish annual financial results, the Authority is committed to increasing transparency. The Authority has adopted the best practice guidance set out in the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 as far as is practical and publishes key documents and information on the Authority's website about how money is being spent. This includes details of payments for goods and services to external bodies and suppliers above £500, details of salaries and allowances paid to staff and Members and procurement information.

[Transparency](#)

[Local Government Transparency Code 2015.](#)

Auditors

Bishop Fleming Limited Liability Partnership is the appointed external auditor for Cheshire Fire Authority and is responsible for completion of the following assurance activities:

- Audit of the 2023-24 financial statements
- Opinion on the Authority's accounts
- Value for Money conclusion

The Internal Audit function for 2023-24 was provided by Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA). A number of audits were commissioned in line with the Authority's risk profile which provided an independent assurance level on the Authority's control frameworks.

Key evidence links

[Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2015](#)

[Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#)

[Statement of Accounts](#)

[Annual Governance Statement](#)

[Medium Term Financial Plan](#)

[Transparency](#)

[Local Government Transparency Code 2015.](#)

4. Governance

The Authority’s governance arrangements and framework aim to ensure that in conducting its business it:

- Operates in a lawful, open, inclusive and honest manner.
- Makes sure public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and spent wisely.
- Has effective arrangements in place to manage risk.
- Meets the needs of the communities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.
- Secures continuous improvements in the way it operates.

Annual Governance Statement

The Authority is required to produce an “Annual Governance Statement” (AGS) which is published as part of the Annual Statement of Accounts. The AGS is an expression of the measures taken by the Authority to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance. It explains how the organisation manages its governance and internal control arrangements and measures the effectiveness of those arrangements.

The [AGS](#) for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 will be published on the Authority’s website with the Annual Statement of Accounts.

Local Code of Corporate Governance

CIPFA published the framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’ in 2016. This best practice guidance sets out seven principles of good governance A to G which are illustrated below, and each principle is considered in the AGS:



How the Authority Works

Cheshire Fire Authority

The Authority has responsibility for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and that proper standards are in place.

The Authority was created in 1997 by the Cheshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order. It is made up of twenty-three elected Members appointed by the constituent authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington Borough Councils. There is also one non-elected independent member who acts in an advisory role on certain committees.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (PCC) can attend and speak at meetings.

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

The **Constitution** of the Authority has the following sections:

- An explanation of key documents produced by the Fire Authority
- Members decision making bodies
- Procedural matters
- Outside bodies
- Members roles
- Protocols
- Members Code of Conduct
- Members allowances
- Financial regulations
- Scheme of Delegation

The Authority's committee structures allow Members to monitor performance and focus on specific responsibilities delegated to the committees. The Authority has an effective strategic and financial planning process which includes rigorous review and challenge by Members.

The Authority operates with the following main Committee structure:

- Performance and Overview Committee
- Governance and Constitution Committee
- Brigade Managers Pay and Performance Committee
- Staffing Committee
- Estates and Property Committee
- Audit Committee

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

Fire Authority Members take on various Member Champion roles to a number of thematic areas to provide additional scrutiny and challenge; these include risk, equality, young people, older people, pensions, finance and the environment.

The Service Leadership Team Structure

The operations of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service are directed through a clear leadership and management structure with defined roles and responsibilities. The Service Leadership Team is comprised of:

- Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
- Director of Governance
- Treasurer
- Heads of Department

Monitoring Officer:

During the 2023-24 financial year the Director of Governance fulfilled the statutory role of Monitoring Officer for the Authority, ensuring all actions taken were lawful.

Treasurer/Section 151 Officer:

Responsibility to this role changed during 2023-24. At the end of the period, the role was briefly fulfilled by the Treasurer. He has responsibility for day-to-day financial management in accordance with CIPFA guidance as well as the matters set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Cheshire Fire Authority has a plan called the IRMP which assesses local fire and rescue related risks and details how these will be addressed. The IRMP is published on the Authority's website. The IRMP will be superseded by a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) on 1st April 2024.

In 2020 the Authority decided to produce a four-year IRMP covering the period 2020-2024. It produces Annual Action Plans to support the delivery of the IRMP.

Vision and Mission

The Authority's **vision** is defined as

"A Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires or other emergencies"

and its **mission**

"To help create safer communities, to rescue people and protect economic, environmental and community interests"

Core Values

The Authority also has a set of values and behaviours to define what is expected of everyone involved with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Following consultation and engagement with staff new Core Values were introduced in March 2020 and updated in 2022 to include the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

These **Core Values and NFCC Core Code of Ethics** are:

Being Inclusive: By acting fairly, with integrity, respect and without prejudice

Do the Right Thing: By holding each other to account for ensuring high standards of professionalism in everything we do

Act with Compassion: By being understanding and offering help to each other and to our communities with warmth, patience and kindness

Make a Difference: By making an impact in our organisation and in our communities in whatever ways we can, for as many people as we can

NFCC Code of Ethics

Putting our communities first

Integrity

Dignity and respect

Leadership

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Performance Management: How we performed during 2023 – 2024

As part of the corporate planning process the Authority measures and monitors performance using a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are also used to compare performance against other fire and rescue authorities in England.

Achievements against these indicators are scrutinised quarterly by the Performance and Overview Committee and Performance and Programme Board and annually by the Fire Authority.

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

DATA TO BE INSERTED ONCE IT IS
VALIDATED AND FINALISED.

An Annual Report is produced each year setting out how the Authority has performed over the last 12 months.

Performance information can be accessed in the Performance section of the Authority's website.

Auditors

Internal Audit:

The Authority's Internal Audit function for 2023-24 was outsourced to Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA). A risk-based internal audit plan has been delivered by MIAA. A number of audits were commissioned in line with our risk profile which provided an independent assurance level on the Authority's control frameworks.

The internal audit team completed a number of compliance and assurance audits during 2023-24 aligned to the approved internal audit plan, which have generally resulted in positive opinions with a small number of recommendations made as a result of their findings. Action plans have been put in place to deal with any issues found during the audits.

Internal Audit Opinion 2023-24:

TO BE INSERTED WHEN AVAILABLE

External Audit:

The Authority has appointed Bishop Fleming as external auditors and established protocols are in place for working with External Audit.

External Audit Opinion 2023-24:

TO BE INSERTED WHEN AVAILABLE.

Key evidence links

[Delivering Good Governance 2016](#)
[Local Code of Corporate Governance Principals A-G](#)
[Annual Governance Statement](#)
[Integrated Risk Management Plan](#)
[CFRS Vision, Mission, Core values](#)
[Constitution](#)
[Annual Report for 2023](#)
[Corporate Scorecard 2023-24](#)
[Internal Audit Opinion](#)

5. Operational Assurance

The Fire and Rescue Services National Framework for England outlines the requirement placed upon fire and rescue authorities to provide assurance on operational matters which are determined locally by them.

Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and rescue authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. The Authority is required to comply with a range of laws, regulations and guidance. Links to some of the key legislation/guidance can be accessed below:

[Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#)

[Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)

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

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

[Localism Act 2011](#)

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018](#)

[Local Government Act 1999](#)

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

[Policing and Crime Act 2017](#)

To ensure that the Authority can demonstrate how it complies with this statutory and policy framework a number of detailed assessments are undertaken.

- Progress against the Authority's Health and Safety policy/framework is regularly presented to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.
- The Authority regularly assesses operational capability against risks in the area covered by the Authority to ensure that the right resources, procedures and skills are available to respond to incidents within a target response time.
- The Authority undertakes an annual review of operational risk and performance, supplemented by scrutiny at quarterly Member and officer meetings.
- The Risk Management Group monitors and scrutinises strategic risks (with Audit Committee providing a high level overview).

Corporate Planning

There is a robust corporate planning process in place which facilitates the development of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Fire authorities must produce an IRMP which assesses local fire and rescue related risks and details how these will be addressed. The IRMP takes account of the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework and outlines the key risks and influences facing Cheshire and how the Authority is currently structured to address them.

The Authority outlined its plans for 2020-24 in its Integrated Risk Management Plan "Saving Lives, Changing Lives, Protecting Lives". This was approved by the Authority in July 2020 following a period of public and staff consultation. Annual Action Plans are agreed by the Fire Authority during the lifetime of the Plan.

A new CRMP will come into force on 1st April 2024.

Community Risk Management

Through its Community Risk Management (CRM) Model, the Service undertakes risk and performance analysis in order to ensure that strategic, tactical and operational activities are intelligence-led and evaluated. This is achieved by using specialist systems, software, data and skills analysis delivered by the Business Intelligence Team.

Unitary Area Plans

In addition to, and complementing the IRMP (from 1st April 2024, the CRMP), each council area has a Unitary Performance Group (UPG) involving local Fire Authority members in performance management. The UPG meets quarterly to scrutinise data and performance. Unitary Area Plans are developed for each unitary area. Each plan is unique to that area and contains the actions the Unitary teams will take in order to mitigate risk and improve community safety. These plans are informed by the Community Risk Management Model which brings together historic incident data, demographic, commercial and external risk factors.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Authority is committed to involving all of its stakeholders in the development of its strategies and plans. It encourages this by carrying out a consultation programmes in relation to the draft IRMP and emerging Annual Action Plans (more recently the CRMP). Local communities, partners, staff, representative bodies and other stakeholders are invited to comment to ensure that before any decision is taken a broad range of views are taken into account. To enable active and informed participation, data and information relevant to the plan is made available to the public on the Service's website and via social media, in consultation packs, which are distributed at community roadshow events held across Cheshire, and also at key local stakeholder forums and meetings.

Fire Prevention (Community Safety)

The Authority has a risk-based approach to prevention. This risk profile is developed through the Community Risk Management Model using a range of tools including Exeter data from health partners. It's Safe and Well programme was developed in conjunction with NHS and local health partners. Safe and Well visits provide advice to householders on fire safety in the home but also address health priorities such as the prevention of slips, trips and falls, smoking cessation and alcohol reduction, bowel cancer screening and tests for atrial fibrillation.

The Service also works with partner agencies to deliver road safety initiatives targeted at vulnerable users such as young drivers and motorcyclists.

The Authority is commissioned to provide early intervention programmes such as RESPECT and is a delivery partner for the Prince's Trust programme.

It has also had a significant commitment to raising awareness and prevention through its safety and life skills centre, Safety Central.

Fire Protection

The Authority operates a risk-based intelligence-led inspection programme of non-domestic premises. If a business is audited, the audit will be carried out by a qualified fire-safety officer who will follow a set procedure which is designed to establish compliance with the

requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Authority always aims to help businesses comply with fire safety legislation; however, at times it has to enforce the law by implementing a formal enforcement procedure and will on occasion prosecute. This is always a last resort and the Authority will endeavour to avoid this course of action by working with business owners/managers via a range of key interventions:

- A dedicated team of non-enforcing officers who proactively deliver interventions and offer advice tailored to the different sectors of the business community.
- Protection staff offer support to businesses to assist in complying with legislation.
- Information provided digitally to support businesses.
- Proactively working with partners and key stakeholders to raise awareness of the fire safety benefits of sprinkler systems.

The Government's Primary Authority Scheme is a means for a business to receive assured and tailored advice on meeting environmental health, trading standards or fire safety regulations through a single point of contact. This enables the business to invest with confidence in products, practices and procedures, knowing that the resources they devote to compliance are well spent. The Authority supports the Primary Authority Scheme and will consider entering into partnerships with a business or organisation to provide assured and tailored fire safety advice. The approach it adopts creates a more consistent and co-ordinated regulatory environment. It has a number of active partnerships.

Fire investigation is an integral part of the Service's Prevention and Protection activities. The main purpose of fire investigation is to determine the origin, cause and development of a fire and to contribute to organisational learning.

All fires attended will be investigated to establish the cause of fire. Where a fire has occurred, investigators have a power of entry under Section 45 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 which allows an authorised employee to gain entry to premises in order to investigate the cause and progression of the fire that has occurred there.

Investigation outcomes will steer future prevention and protection activities and may assist in the detection and prevention of crime. They may also lead to inspections focused on certain risks or themes.

Emergency Response

The Authority responds to a range of emergency incidents with 35 fire engines operating from 28 fire stations across Cheshire. Fire stations are crewed by operational staff who work different shift patterns depending upon local risk:

- Wholetime: firefighters operate on stations 24 hours per day, working 12 hour shifts.
- Day Crewing: during the daytime the station is crewed by wholetime firefighters who also live next to the fire station to provide emergency cover overnight
- Nucleus: fire stations are crewed by wholetime firefighters during day time hours and by on-call firefighters overnight
- On-Call: firefighters live or work in the local community near to the fire station and respond to emergency calls via an alerter

During 2023-24, the Authority had in place a Cheshire Standard to respond to life-risk incidents (e.g. house fires and road traffic collisions) within ten minutes on 80% of occasions. This will alter on 1st April 2024 at the commencement of the CRMP.

Pre-determined attendance requirements are developed through the analysis of risk information from sources such as incident data and site-specific risk information. Through

the Authority's review of emergency response, specialist assets have been placed in strategic locations to improve response to incidents across Cheshire and respond to local risks, such as road traffic collisions on motorways.

The Authority's debrief policy outlines processes for evaluating operational learning and improvement.

Incident command is embedded within the internal assessment procedures, with incident commanders assessed regularly through live and simulated exercises arranged locally and centrally.

Organisational performance, including the Service's emergency response and call handling performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC), is scrutinised through structures such as Performance and Programme Board, Unitary Performance Groups, the Fire Authority's Performance and Overview Committee and by Directors of the NWFC Board.

The Authority conducts Site Specific Risk Inspections (SSRIs) for high-risk premises in Cheshire. A dedicated SSRI training officer is in post alongside an SSRI portfolio holder for on-call fire stations.

Cheshire has 29 Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) sites and employs a high-risk training officer. Both on-site and off-site incident plans are managed by the Cheshire Resilience Forum and tested through multi-agency exercises.

The Authority influences the development of operational response, training and occupational standards at a regional level through membership of a number of North West fire and rescue services and multi-agency groups and forums.

Business Continuity – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

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

Interoperability, Resilience and Safety

A comprehensive range of risk intelligence data and information is taken into account as part of the risk identification and analysis process underpinning the IRMP (soon to be the CRMP). This includes Cheshire's Community Risk Register, with the Authority having a leading role in the Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) which focuses on interoperability and joint planning and training exercises with other emergency services using the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Additional joint training and planning has taken place following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack to ensure the effectiveness of the Authority's response to a similar event within Cheshire.

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

The Authority is represented on the Cheshire CONTEST group, which has developed plans for notification of, and response to, a multi-agency marauding terrorist firearms attack (MTFA). Cheshire's National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs) have received MTFA response training via regional NILO groups.

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

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

- Merseyside
- Staffordshire
- Shropshire
- Derbyshire
- Greater Manchester
- North Wales

Health and Safety

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

The Authority has an H&S management system based on Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance. There are clearly defined management responsibilities; as far as reasonably practicable the Authority assesses and manages the risks arising from its activities, consults its employees on matters affecting H&S, and provides training and information to employees.

The Authority has an Occupational Health Unit to support the health and wellbeing of staff. The Authority has signed up to the MIND Blue Light campaign to support mental health and wellbeing in the workforce and provided training to mental health champions and is looking to introduce more widely a Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) process. The Authority has a Mental Health Advisor, Mental Health Strategy and Mental Health Steering Group. It intends to give mental health parity of esteem with physical health.

The Authority has introduced an electronic system to support the reporting and investigation of all accidents and near misses that occur and to track the investigations conducted with the intention of preventing recurrence.

As part of the H&S Management System there is a programme of audits and inspections. The audits are based on the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents Quality Safety Audit system and its performance indicators. These audits and inspections inform the annual review of H&S Policy and performance. They also contribute towards an Annual Health and Safety report submitted to the Authority's Performance and Overview Committee.

Firefighter Fitness

The Authority has had a policy to ensure the fitness of its operational staff for some time. In December 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued an addendum to the National Framework for England in relation to firefighter fitness. In 2015 the Authority proposed amendments to its then current fitness policy to align it to the National Framework requirements and the national fitness standards.

The Authority recruited a full-time Fitness Advisor to lead on supporting the firefighters to attain and maintain the fitness standards required, and to undertake fitness testing. Fitness testing for all operational staff takes place annually. Performance is monitored at the Service's Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Operational Training

The Service has an Operational Training Strategy which outlines its approach to ensuring that its operational staff are trained and competent in order to fulfil the various operational demands placed upon them.

All new firefighters attend basic training which is broken down into modules and each module is assessed.

All front-line operational staff, inclusive of new starters, attend regular fire station planned training as detailed within their Station Training Forecast in order to maintain their operational abilities and competence. They also attend centrally planned refresher training.

Breathing apparatus refresher training takes place in dedicated 'hot fire' conditions annually and the Service aims to ensure that 100% of all eligible staff attend. An electronic course management system aids the monitoring of training.

Compartment fire behaviour training capability is refreshed every two years and the Service aims to ensure 100% of all eligible staff attend.

Road traffic extrication techniques, trauma care, dealing with hazardous materials, and working safely at height skills are refreshed over a three-year period and each year the Service aims to refresh the skills, knowledge and understanding of one third of its operational workforce with the intention to achieve 100% of all eligible staff attendance after three years. The swift water rescue capability of the Service's key water incident fire stations is validated by the staff attending two days of assessment every year.

The Service delivers in-house Large Goods Vehicle training on a one to one basis for its front line firefighters. Once they are designated as a fire appliance emergency response driver they then go on to attend a one-day emergency response driving refresher within a five-year period.

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

Managers are all trained and assessed for their skills, knowledge and understanding in Incident Command. A dedicated Command Training Group (CTG) of vocationally qualified officers plan, deliver and assess these training programmes. The quality of the Incident Command Training within the Service has attracted business from several other fire and rescue services and other emergency services as well as private and public organisations including several high-risk industries.

The Authority has a modern operational training centre, based at its Headquarters, Sadler Road, Winsford. While the success of prevention work has led to a long term reduction in fires, this does mean that firefighters are more reliant on training and simulation to develop experience instead of gaining experience during operational firefighting. The training centre provides firefighters with realistic and immersive training to safely and effectively deal with a wide range of incidents that may occur across Cheshire.

Key evidence links

[Integrated Risk Management Plan](#)
[CRM Model](#)
[Unitary Performance Area Profiles](#)
[Safe and Well](#)
[Safety Central](#)
[Fire Safety advice for Businesses](#)
[JESIP](#)
[Annual Health and Safety Report](#)
[Firefighter Fitness Addendum](#)
[Firefighter Fitness Policy](#)
[Operational Training Strategy](#)
[Community Risk Management Plan](#)

6. His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

HMICFRS carried out its third-round inspection of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2023. The last inspection took place in December 2021.

The inspection process focused on three key themes:

- a. How effective is CFRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- b. How efficient is CFRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
- c. How well does CFRS look after its people?

The report summary:

Our judgements

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Public safety through fire regulation	Understanding fire and risk		
	Future affordability	Preventing fire and risk		
	Promoting values and culture	Responding to fires and emergencies		
	Right people, right skills	Responding to major incidents		
	Promoting fairness and diversity	Best use of resources		
	Managing performance and developing leaders			

It goes on to say:

It was a pleasure to visit Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way in which the service worked with our inspection staff.

I am pleased with the performance of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks, but it needs to improve in some areas to provide a consistently good service. For example, the service could improve how it gathers up-to-date risk information to help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency. It could also improve how it learns from incidents.

We were pleased to see that the service has made progress since our 2021 inspection. For example, it has improved its staff appraisal process and its business continuity arrangements in fire control.

My principal findings from our assessments of the service over the past year are as follows:

- The service's prevention activity is effectively targeted. We were encouraged to find that the service has improved how safe and well visits (SAWVs) are targeted to individuals who are most at risk or are seldom heard and how the information it gathers during visits is used.*
- The service's protection activity is clearly linked to local risk. Its risk-based inspection programme is focused on its highest-risk buildings. But we found that the service wasn't consistently auditing the targeted buildings within the time frame it set itself.*
- The service should make sure that risk information is accurate and up to date. We sampled a range of risk information at wholetime and on-call stations, including the information in place for firefighters responding to incidents. We found information wasn't always up to date or detailed.*
- The service has a sound understanding of its future financial challenges. It has plans to mitigate its significant financial risks. We were pleased to see that the service has identified savings and investment opportunities to improve its service to the public or generate further savings.*
- The service continues to have well-defined values, which staff understand. There is a positive working culture throughout the service, with staff feeling empowered and willing to challenge poor behaviours when they come across them.*

Overall, I am pleased with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's performance and the improvements it has made since our last inspection. I encourage it to continue to make improvements in the areas we have highlighted.

Key evidence links

[HMICFRS Inspection Report 2023](#)
[HMICFRS Inspection 2021 Action Plan](#)
[Update HMICFRS Values and Culture](#)
[Report Recommendations](#)

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 24 APRIL 2024
REPORT OF : DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE
AUTHOR: DONNA LINTON

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2023-24 AND MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024-25

Purpose of Report

1. The Member Training and Development Group (MTDG) requested that a report be submitted to the Fire Authority that provided a review of the Service's member training and development activities over the last year for information (attached as Appendix 1).
2. This paper also presents the proposed Member Development Programme for 2024-25 for approval (attached as Appendix 2).

Recommended: That

- [1] the review of Member Training and Development activities for 2023-24 be noted; and
- [2] the 2023-24 Member Training and Development Programme be approved.

Review of Member Training and Development 2023-24

3. The Review includes a summary of the delivery of the Member Training and Development Programme 2023-24 and progress on the development and implementation of the Member Training and Development Strategy 2022-24.

Member Development Programme 2023-24

4. The proposed Member Training and Development Programme covers the generic training and development sessions scheduled for 2024-25 and also includes some core modules that have been identified in Members' Personal Development Reviews (PDRs).
5. Most Members have completed a PDR in 2023-24 and the outcomes of the training needs analysis have been discussed by the MTDG and fed into the annual programme for 2024-25, where appropriate.

6. There were several new development needs identified by Members which the MTDG felt were extremely relevant for the wider Fire Authority audience. This included social media training, IT and information management and handling media enquiries. Development opportunities based on these needs have been incorporated into the 2024-25 programme.
7. Democratic Services will continue to work with the Leadership Development Advisor to develop a programme for delivery of individual training needs.

Financial Implications

8. The cost of delivering the Programme will be met from within the existing budget allocation for Member development. The need for any additional resources as the Programme is delivered will be monitored during the year. Elements of the Programme may need to be prioritised.

Legal Implications

9. There are no specific legal implications from this report. However, member training will assist Members when they are making decisions and therefore help to ensure that the Fire Authority meets its statutory obligations.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. There are no specific equality and diversity implications. However, equality and diversity training for Members is included in the Induction Programme for new Members.

Environmental Implications

11. There are no specific environmental implications from this report. Environmental awareness training for Members is included in the Induction Programme for new Members and additional updates will be considered as the environmental landscape changes.

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: NONE



Cheshire
Fire Authority



Member Training and Development Group Review 2023-24

Version 1.0 – March 2023

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www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Authority remains committed to ensuring that all Members have access to and undertake adequate training and development opportunities to better enable them to fulfil their roles as Fire Authority Members. This report provides a review of the Member Training and Development activities undertaken during 2023-2024 and the work carried out by the Member Training and Development Group.

2. MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE OF THE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

- 2.1 The Fire Authority's Member Training and Development Group is a cross-party group composed of five Fire Authority Members and an independent (non-elected) member.

Membership for 2023-24

Councillor Laura Smith (Chair)

Councillor Kath Buckley

Councillor Peter Coan

Councillor Rob Moreton

Councillor Karen Mundry

Derek Barnett (independent (non-elected) member)

2.2 Terms of Reference

RESPONSIBILITIES

To advise on the development, monitoring and evaluation of a Member Training and Development Programme to ensure that Members' training needs are being met.

3. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

- 3.1 The Member Training and Development Group (the Group) usually meets on a quarterly basis to carry out its roles and functions in respect of the development, monitoring and evaluation of Member development activities for Fire Authority Members. Meetings have taken place on 4th July, 12th December 2023 and 26th March 2024.
- 3.2 The Group plays a key role in assisting officers with Member development activities. Key areas of work carried out during 2023-24 include:
- Development, implementation and quarterly monitoring of the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 (the Strategy).
 - Development, implementation and quarterly monitoring of the Member Development Programme for 2023-24 (the Programme).
 - Review/refresh of the Personal Development Review process for 2023-24
 - Review of the outcomes from Personal Development Reviews conducted in 2023-24.
 - Evaluation of the Induction Programme for 2023-24.
 - Review of the training and development of Member Champions.

4. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2022-24

- 4.1 The Member Development Strategy 2022-24 was initially approved by the Fire Authority in December 2021. The Strategy sets out the Authority's strategic direction in respect of Member Development for the two-year period.
- 4.2 The implementation plan for the Strategy was monitored at each meeting of the Group and a copy of the annual progress plan is attached as Annex 1 to the report. An outline of the objectives and progress to date is detailed below:

Objective 1 – Identify and prioritise Members' Training and Development Needs

Members' training and development needs were identified through personal development review meetings. The majority of personal development review meetings took place between July and October 2023. A summary report with the outcomes from the meetings was taken to the Member Training and Development Group in December 2023.

Personal development plans were created from these review meetings and most individual training needs identified have been met through one-to-one sessions with the relevant departments or officers. Training identified that was felt to be beneficial to all Members has been incorporated into the Programme for 2024-25.

General training and development needs identified from the 2023-24 personal development plans included:

- A Day in the Life of a Firefighter
- Tour of the Training Centre, Sadler Road
- Tour of Safety Central
- Visit to North West Fire Control
- Visits to local fire stations
- Social Media

Objective 2 – Review and refresh the Members Personal Development Review process to ensure that it remains effective for both experienced Members and new Members

Officers continued using the template which simplified and updated the personal development plans to ensure all elements were still relevant. Members rated their knowledge of different areas from 1-4 (1 = below the level required to 4 = outstanding) to ascertain areas where development was required. These results were also compared within the previous year. All Members saw some increase in their knowledge of the Authority and Service.

Objective 3 – Provision of an annual Member Development Programme that is in line with priorities identified and within available resources

The Programme was approved by the Authority in June 2023. It covered general training and development sessions for all Members, as well as induction sessions specifically tailored for new Members. A copy of the Programme is attached as Annex 2 to this report. Several virtual webinar style training sessions took place throughout the Programme which were well received by Members.

In person Members’ Planning Days took place throughout 2023-24 which provided an opportunity for Members to further their knowledge and understanding the Service. The Planning Days aimed to provide Members with key information to enable them to make informed decisions about the Authority/Service’s future. They also provided an opportunity for updates to be given on local and national issues within the sector.

All Members and the independent (non-elected) member, were encouraged to attend the Planning Days and to provide feedback on the sessions to ensure that they remain informative and relevant. An overview of attendance follows:

Meeting Date	Number of attendees	Completed evaluation forms
7 th July 2023	16	10
11 th August 2023	16	12

8 th September 2023	19	9
10 th November 2023	18	15
12 th January 2024	15	7
22 nd March 2024	12	11

A 'Mop Up' Planning Day session was held for the Members who were not able to attend the Member Planning Day meeting on 11th August 2024. This was included in the Programme to ensure that all Members were informed of the proposals for the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 and had the opportunity for scrutiny.

Overall, feedback continues to be very positive from the Planning Days with the majority of Members stating that they found the sessions to be 'Completely' applicable to support their role on the Fire Authority.

Feedback highlights from the Planning Days included:

7th July 2023:

"Excellent Planning Day – well organised – relevant and informative"

"Learning about the Service and the important work they're done. Being part of the future of the Service. Being able to make suggestions."

11th August 2023:

"The way, possibly complex, informative and data was explained in an accessible manner."

"I am very pleased (as a newbie) to be welcomed and look forward to enabling all CFRS colleagues to meet your challenging targets."

8th September 2023:

"Full understanding of changes made and reassurance re. safeguarding"

"Excellent presentations open honest and nothing hidden"

10th November 2023:

"Excellent videos and update on staff survey feedback very reassuring bearing in mind nationally the image is not good."

“Being well briefed is important for us passing on the information to other town councillors as well as to residents.”

12th January 2024

“I find these sessions the most rewarding and informative of all our meetings. Keep them going.”

“Well organised – officer input very good – plain English (some acronyms need explaining for new Members)”

22nd March 2024:

“These Planning Days, I find, are the best way to inform Members.”

Objective 4 – Delivery of a comprehensive and effective induction process for new Members

Six new Members joined the Fire Authority in 2023-24. The new Members were sent a welcome pack from Democratic Services and attended a one-to-one meeting with the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. Any further information was supplemented through the officer/Member buddy system.

Objective 5 – Member Champions – Review current roles and maximise opportunities for Member Champions to access support networks and development opportunities in line with their specific remit

Each Member Champion has a Lead Officer appointed to assist them in their role. At the beginning of each year a meeting is arranged for the Member Champion to meet with the Lead Officer to discuss the work for the year ahead.

Throughout the year the Lead Officers also assist with ensuring that Member Champions have been invited to attend Local Government Association networking groups, training and conferences where relevant.

The Member Champion arrangements were reviewed by the Governance and Constitution Committee. The outcomes of the review saw the introduction of a role profile for each Member Champion role and a mechanism for reporting activities was implemented at the Member Planning Day on 22nd March 2024.

These arrangements have been in place for 12 months and the Governance and Constitution Committee are due to review their effectiveness. The Member Training and Development Group provided feedback to the Governance and Constitution Committee for the Member Champion arrangements as part of their review.

Objective 6 - Continuous Development

The Member Training and Development Group has reviewed monitoring reports on the progress of implementing the Member Development Strategy 2022-24 at its meetings throughout 2023-24.

The Member Development Strategy 2022-24 was taken to the Member Training and Development Group for review in October 2021 prior to submission to the Authority for approval. The Member Development Strategy 2024-26 was reviewed by the Group in November 2022 and has been approved by the Fire Authority, ready for its implementation in June 2024.

The Member Development Satisfaction Survey 2023-24 was sent to all Members for feedback on the training and development opportunities throughout the year. Some of the questions informed the stakeholder consultation for the Governance department review.

ANNEX 1

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Key Actions</u>	<u>Responsible Officers</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
1. Identify and prioritise Members Training and Development Needs	1.1 Complete Annual Personal Development Reviews and Development Plans for all Members	People and Organisational Development/ Democratic Services	Oct 23
	1.2 Complete an initial Personal Development Review and check personal development plans for newly elected Members as part of the induction programme	People and Organisational Development/ Democratic Services	Jul –Sep 23
	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 Organisational Development/ Democratic Services	Oct 23
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 Organisational Development/ Democratic Services	Dec 23
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	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager/Member Training and Development Group (MTDG)	Jun 23
	3.2 Review the annual programme to ensure that it aligns with any future changes introduced as part of the national Fire Reform Programme	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Ongoing
	3.3 Produce a quarterly monitoring report on the delivery of the programme for submission to the Member Training and Development Group	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jul 23 Oct 23 Dec 23 Mar 24

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Key Actions</u>	<u>Responsible Officers</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
4. Delivery of a comprehensive and effective Induction process for new Members	4.1 Provision of Induction Programme for New Members	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jun - Jul 23
	4.2 Provision of Information Pack for New Members (on appointment to Fire Authority)	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jun 23
	4.3 Annually review the Member/Officer Buddy System to ensure it remains effective	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Oct 23
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	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MDTG Governance and Constitution Committee	Mar 24
6. Continuous Development	6.1 Produce quarterly monitoring reports in respect of the Strategy's implementation plan for MTDG	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager	Jul 23 Oct 23 Dec 23 Mar 24
	6.2 Present an annual report on Member Development activities to the Fire Authority	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Apr 24
	6.3 Carry out an annual review of Member Development Strategy	Governance and Corporate Planning Manager MTDG	Dec 23
	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	Apr 24



ANNEX 2

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2023/2024

DATE	EVENT	SUBJECT	OBJECTIVE	NOTES
2023				
5 July	Induction Session	Initial welcome and induction session hosted by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive: Welcome and overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Core functions of the Fire Authority and overview of the Constitution	To provide an overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and introduce new Members to the Service Leadership Team. To provide an overview of the Fire Authority and the roles/responsibilities of new Members.	For new Members 4 Members attended
6 July	Webinar, Teams Session	External Audit Training	Grant Thornton representatives will provide training on external audit functions within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	All Members event 8 Members attended Mandatory attendance for Audit Committee members (1 attended)

7 July	Planning Day	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan Update</p> <p>Development of Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28</p> <p>PESTELO</p> <p>Community Risk Model Presentation</p>	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	<p>All Members event</p> <p>16 Members attended</p>
21 July	Webinar, Teams Session (mandatory)	Internal Audit Training	Merseyside Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) representatives will provide training on the internal audit processes within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.	<p>All Members event</p> <p>8 Members attended</p> <p>Mandatory attendance for Audit Committee members (1 attended)</p>
31 st July	Webinar, Teams Session	Fire Cover Review Re-Cap	<p>To allow those who were not in attendance at the Planning Day on 7th July to engage with the proposals of the CRMP.</p> <p>1:1 session were arranged for those who could not make the session</p>	<p>Members who did not attend the previous Planning Day</p> <p>3 Members attended</p>

11 th August	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event 16 Members attended
22 nd August	Planning Day Re-Cap	Community Risk Management Plan Re-cap	To allow Members who missed the previous Planning Day an opportunity to engage with the CRMP	Members who did not attend the previous Planning Day 7 Members attended
8 September	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event 19 Members attended
15 September	Webinar, Teams Session	Risk Management	To provide an overview of the Service's risk arrangements and introduction to the risk team.	All Members event 10 Members attended Mandatory attendance for Audit Committee members (1 attended)
21 September	Webinar, Teams Session	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	To provide an overview on equality, diversity and inclusion in the Service.	All Members event 4 Members attended

29 September POSTPONED	Visit Training Centre, Sadler Road	Day in the Life of a Firefighter		All Member event
27 October POSTPONED	Visit	Safety Central	To visit the purpose-built facility dedicated to public safety – to learn how to stay safe by experiencing a range of hazards in realistic learning zones that simulate the environments in which injury and harm are most likely to occur.	All Members event
10 th November	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan Update	To provide an update on the Community Risk Management Plan and 2024/25 Budget	All Members event 18 Members attended
8 th December	Visit	North West Fire Control	To observe the call arrangements for the Service provided by North West Fire Control	All Members event 7 Member attended

2024				
12 th January	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Treasury Management Scrutiny of Business Cases/Budget Bids Community Risk Management Plan Consultation	Presentation on the Medium Term Financial Plan including business cases and budget bids for growth and efficiency items. Draft Capital programme and reserve position and Community Risk Management Plan Consultation.	All Members event 15 Members attended
January	Visit	Tour of local fire station	To meet the watch based to your local fire station and understand how the station operates.	All Members event (optional and arranged upon request) No uptake from Members
26 th January	Webinar, Teams Session	Fire risks associated with lithium batteries	To understand the increasing risks of fire associated with products containing lithium batteries.	All Members event 10 Members attended
22 nd March	Planning Day		To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event

Other training and development sessions for 2023/24:

Tour of local fire station – a tour of your local fire station can be arranged upon request. If you are interested in visiting any of Cheshire’s fire station, please contact Democratic Services. A list of fire station open day dates will be circulated to all Members.

IT Training – Various Microsoft courses are running throughout the year. The dates for these meetings are available upon request.

Budget Bid Approvals – visits and Teams sessions will be available throughout the year for Members to have sight on the outcomes of the Budget Bids which have been approved. Examples include Rapid Response Rescue Units and Wildfire capabilities.

HR – A webinar on the human resources policies and Steps Framework will be arranged.

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<p><u>Training/Development from Personal Development Reviews:</u></p> <p>To be included in the MD programme for 2023/24:</p> <p>Communications – Social Media training and handling the press Officers are aiming to provide guidance by Autumn 2023.</p> <p><u>Training/Development associated with Member Champion Roles</u></p> <p>During the review of Member Champion arrangements, the Fire Authority agreed for a role profile to be developed between the Champion and Lead Officer. All Champions will meet with their lead officer to establish the training and development requirements for their roles and opportunities will be arranged accordingly.</p> <p>Note: Democratic Services will liaise directly with individual Members regarding individual PDR training requests.</p>	<p><u>Training/Development associated with Committees</u></p> <p>Dates to be arranged as part of the Committee timetable if required:-</p> <p>Governance and Constitution Committee: Briefings when required</p> <p>Audit Committee: Mandatory attendance at Teams webinar sessions on Internal Audit, External Audit and Risk Management.</p> <p>Performance and Overview Committee: Briefings when required</p> <p>Brigade Manager Pay and Performance Committee and Staffing Committee: Briefings when required</p> <p>Estates and Property Committee: Briefings when required</p> <p>Joint Consultative Committee: Briefings when required</p>
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MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2024/25

MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
2024/2025

DATE	EVENT	SUBJECT	OBJECTIVE	NOTES
2024				
June/July (TBC)	Webinar, Teams Session	Social Media Surgery	<p>The session will focus on the practicalities of social media and dealing with the media.</p> <p>A Panel of experts from the Comms Team will be available to answer any questions/problems/concerns/issues relating to social media, general media relations, campaigning etc</p>	All member event
5 July	Planning Day	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan Update</p> <p>Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 Update</p> <p>PESTELO</p> <p>Community Risk Model Presentation</p>	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event
July (TBC)	Induction Session	<p>Initial welcome and induction session hosted by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome and overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service - Core functions of the Fire Authority and overview of the Constitution 	<p>To provide an overview of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and introduce new Members to the Service Leadership Team.</p> <p>To provide an overview of the Fire Authority and the roles/responsibilities of new Members.</p>	For new Members

July (TBC)	Webinar, Teams Session (mandatory)	Internal Audit Training	Merseyside Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) representatives will provide training on the internal audit processes within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.	All Members event
July (TBC)	Visit Training Centre, Sadler Road	Day in the Life of a Firefighter	To visit the Service's Training Centre and actively engage in the activities undertaken by firefighters including: the wearing a breathing apparatus and using cutting equipment. The tour will also include a detailed view of the command training facility	All Members event
2 August (TBC)	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event
6 September	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event
September (TBC)	Webinar, Teams Session (mandatory)	External Audit Training	External Audit representatives will provide training on external audit functions within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	All Members event
September (TBC)	Webinar, Teams Session	IFE Lecturette	To provide an overview on the IFE Lecturette process.	All Members event

October (TBC)	Visit	Safety Central	To visit the purpose-built facility dedicated to public safety – to learn how to stay safe by experiencing a range of hazards in realistic learning zones that simulate the environments in which injury and harm are most likely to occur	All Members event
October (TBC)	Teams Session	Strategic Risk Register Overview	To provide an overview of the corporate risk register and risk management process of the Service.	All Members event
8 November	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan Update	To provide an update on the Community Risk Management Plan and 2023/24 Budget	All Members event
November (TBC)	Visit	North West Fire Control	To observe the arrangements for the Service provided by North West Fire Control	All Members event
2025				
17 January	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Treasury Management Scrutiny of Business Cases/Budget Bids Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 Update	Presentation on the Medium Term Financial Plan including business cases and budget bids for growth and efficiency items. Draft Capital programme and reserve position and Community Risk Management Plan Consultation.	All Members event

28 March (TBC)	Planning Day	Medium Term Financial Plan Update Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28 Update	To engage with Members on the development of the future direction of the Service	All Members event
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Other training and development sessions for 2024/25:

Tour of local fire station – a tour of your local fire station can be arranged upon request. If you are interested in visiting any of Cheshire’s fire station, please contact Democratic Services.

IT Training – Various Microsoft courses are running throughout the year. The dates for these meetings are available upon request.

Budget Bid Approvals – visits and Teams sessions will be available throughout the year for Members to have sight on the outcomes of the Budget Bids which have been approved. Examples include Rapid Response Rescue Units and Wildfire capabilities.

HR – A webinar on the human resources policies and Steps Framework will be arranged.

Training and Development from Personal Development Reviews:

To be included in the MD programme for 2024/25:

Visits – Fire Stations

Communications – Social Media training and handling the press: Officers are aiming to provide guidance by Autumn 2024 (ongoing – request to comms).

Training/Development associated with Member Champion Roles

During the review of Member Champion arrangements, the Fire Authority agreed for a role profile to be developed between the Champion and Lead Officer. All Champions will meet with their lead officer to establish the training and development requirements for their roles and opportunities will be arranged accordingly.

Note: Democratic Services will liaise directly with individual Members regarding individual PDR training requests.

Training and Development associated with Committees

Dates to be arranged as part of the Committee timetable if required:-

Governance and Constitution Committee:

Briefings when required

Audit Committee:

Internal and External Audit training

Performance and Overview Committee:

Briefings when required

Brigade Manager Pay and Performance Committee and Staffing Committee:

Briefings when required

Estates and Property Committee:

Briefings when required

Joint Consultative Committee:

Briefings when required

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 24 APRIL 2024
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: GRAEME WORRALL

SUBJECT: 2023-24 STAFF ENGAGEMENT FORUM

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with a report on the activity of the 2023-24 Staff Engagement Forum.

Recommended: That

the report be noted.

Background

2. The 2023-24 Staff Engagement Forum is the fourth forum to be established since the introduction of the concept in 2018. The Forum comprises a range of individuals from across the Service who have applied to join the forum, with membership selected from a broad cross-section of the workforce.
3. The Forum largely set its own agenda and meets monthly to discuss various issues and topics, with the aim of suggesting ways in which improvements could be made to the Service.
4. There were 12 Members of the 2023-2024 Forum, from a range of roles and experiences from across the Service. They were:
 - Lottie Germaney, People and Organisational Development (Co-Chair)
 - Martin Dodd, Service Delivery, Powey Lane (Co-Chair)
 - Robert Ward-Dutton, Service Delivery, Runcorn
 - Heather Fox, Service Delivery, Lymm
 - Danielle Burgess, Service Delivery, Macclesfield
 - Phil Cornes, Service Delivery, Crewe
 - Steve Tucker, Service Delivery, Northwich
 - Conner Lafferty, Protection
 - Lawrence Howard, Health, Safety and Wellbeing
 - Helen Crick, Communications and Engagement
 - Hannah MacDonald, Service Delivery, Halton and Warrington Admin Hub
 - Hayley Williams, Governance and Democratic Services

Forum Contributions

5. The Forum held a total of nine meetings over the course of their year-long tenure, covering a range of topics and issues. A further meeting is planned following the presentation of this report, which will be the final meeting of this Forum. The following paragraphs summaries some of the topics that were discussed.
6. Also, as a standing item of business, each month the Forum provided an initial assessment for staff suggestions as part of the Ignite staff suggestion scheme. In total 56 ideas were assessed.

Integration between operational and non-operational staff

7. The Forum considered ways to improve integration between operational and non-operational staff within the Service, to help to support a positive culture, develop stronger links between different parts of the Service and improve cross-departmental communications. The Forum undertook initial planning on holding a specific event to bring colleagues together, which has now been incorporated into preparations for a new Cheshire Safety Day, scheduled for 12 September 2024.

Development of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28

8. Forum members were involved in two dedicated sessions as part of the pre-consultation phase of the development of the CRMP 2024-28. Members were provided with the data used to inform the fire cover review and took part in a workshop to explore various options for the provision of fire cover.

2023 Staff Survey and HMICFRS Feedback

9. The Forum provided feedback on the 2023 Staff Survey, acting as a focus group for the independent survey provider to obtain views and comments on a range of questions as part of the survey process itself. Secondly, members were asked to provide comment against the outcomes of the survey and suggest actions to address the emerging corporate level themes, including feeling informed about what is happening across the service and maintaining the visibility of senior leaders.
10. The Forum was also encouraged to provide views on the outcome of the 2023 inspection of the Service by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), in particular comments on taking forward any areas of improvements identified within the report.

Promotion board process

11. The Forum provided views and suggestions on potential improvements to the promotion board processes for operational staff, following the 2023 promotion board programme. The feedback received was considered by the project team reviewing the promotion boards, with several suggestions incorporated into the new process effective from 2024.

Review of the Ignite suggestion scheme

12. The Forum helped to review the Ignite staff suggestion scheme, suggesting improvements to the process from an end-user perspective. The feedback provided has been incorporated into a redesigned intranet page featuring a tracker to improve transparency and feedback on suggestions.

Internal communications and engagement

13. The Forum also provided feedback into the ongoing review of internal communications across the Service, covering issues including accessing the intranet, internal communications channels and corporate events. The feedback provided will be considered as part of the review process, which is due to conclude later in the year, and will directly inform the Service's new Internal Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Charity Fundraiser

14. Finally, the Forum is planning to hold a charity fundraising raffle to raise funds for the Fire Fighters Charity. Members are currently in the process of sourcing a range of donated prizes before promoting the event and are aiming to hold the raffle on Wednesday 26 June.

Financial Implications

15. A dedicated budget within the Communications and Engagement cost centre is provided to source external meeting venues and catering, plus any associated materials such as stationery, to facilitate the meetings of the Forum. In addition, each Forum member receives a £1,000 performance payment at the conclusion of the year, in recognition of their individual contributions.

Legal Implications

16. None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. Members of the Forum were appointed to provide a range of diverse views and experiences from all departments within the Service.

Environmental Implications

18. None.

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PLANNING
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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

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CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE: 24 APRIL 2024
REPORT OF: HEAD OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
AUTHOR: KATIE WHITEHEAD

SUBJECT: SALE OF HOUSES IN STOCKTON HEATH

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the sale of the service houses in Stockton Heath.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members authorise officers to arrange the sale of the houses at Stockton Heath

Background

2. Members recently approved the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28 which provides for the removal of the on-call fire engine from Stockton Heath Fire Station; the fire engine being crewed 4 days out of 8 weekdays by full-time firefighters.
3. The service owns 10 houses in Stockton Heath which were historically used as housing for the day crewed staff prior to the change to on-call. Following the change to on-call the houses were used to accommodate staff providing on-call cover.
4. The CRMP stated the intention to sell the houses in Stockton Heath to contribute the capital programme, e.g. to assist with the cost of replacing the fire station in Ellesmere Port and Warrington.

Information

5. Staff have obviously been kept informed and the occupiers of the service houses in Stockton Heath have been consulted with since last year about the CRMP and were notified of the decision in February. Consultation is continuing.
6. Already three of the service houses are vacant with others due to become vacant over the next 8-12 months. As a result, officers would like to progress the sale of the vacant houses.

7. The houses will only be sold when they become vacant in line with the wider project to cease the on-call cover.
8. Staff are being supported as the station changes are implemented and representative bodies are fully involved in consultation and negotiation.
9. The Joint Estates Team will manage the process of the sale on behalf of the Service as they have done previously when we sold surplus houses at Congleton, Knutsford and Northwich.
10. Each house sale will require the approval of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Head of Finance. This was the governance applied previously allowing swift decisions to be made about offers made by prospective purchasers.

Financial Implications

11. The sale of the houses will raise capital which the Authority can use to fund future capital projects. It is hoped that the sale of all ten houses will raise a total of somewhere between £3-3.5m.
12. Some costs will be incurred in estate agent and legal fees.

Legal Implications

13. The sales will be conducted on the open market with suitable advice from an estate agent. Officers will have in mind the Government land disposal advice which anticipates local authorities selling assets for the 'best consideration reasonably obtainable'.

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. There are no equality or diversity implications associated with this paper

Environmental Implications

15. There are no major environmental impacts from this paper

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