



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday, 12 July 2023 at Lecture Theatre - Training Centre, Sadler Road,
Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillors Phil Harris, Peter Wheeler, Steve Collings, Razia Daniels, Nick Mannion, Margaret Simon and Norman Wright

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

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

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Bird and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett.

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 1st March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4, 2022-23

The Group Manager for Organisational Performance and Planning introduced the report, which provided an update on the performance for each of the Service's Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for Quarter 4, 2022-23.

The Group Manager referred Members to the KPI relating to the number of deaths in primary fires. One fire fatality occurred in Quarter 4 taking the total for the year to six. The age profile of the casualties reaffirms the broader approach taken to delivering the Safe and Well visits, with 3 fatalities in the under 65 years age group and 3 fatalities over 65 years old.

The Group Manager drew Members' attention to the Number of Deliberate Fires. 174 deliberate primary fires were recorded at the end of Quarter 4, against a target of 250. The station areas with the highest number of incidents were Runcorn, Warrington and Widnes. The number of deliberate secondary fires recorded at the

end of Quarter 4 was 907, against a target of 741. The highest number of incidents were recorded in the Runcorn, Winsford, and Widnes station areas, accounting for 46% of all incidents.

The Group Manager referred Members to the Number of Safe and Well visits delivered to people of Heightened Risk. The cumulative total for the year was 19,105 against a target of 20,000. He asked Members to note that if all Safe and Well visits were included the total for the year was 21,861.

The Group Manager drew Members' attention to the Risk Based Inspection Programme. The total number of inspections completed for the year was 1004 against a target of 1240. This was due to the shortage of qualified staff able to complete the inspections. This was year one in the two-year programme and the Protection department had a plan in place to meet the two-yearly target of 2480 Risk Based Inspections.

A Member queried how proactive the Service was in targeting nuisance fires. The Group Manager advised that the Service works with a single point of contact within the Police for a specific area to drive down nuisance fires. The Service also engages with young people through youth programmes and open days.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 4, 2022-23 be noted.

3 PROGRAMME REPORT - QUARTER 4, 2022-23

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update on the Service's programmes and projects, including those contained within the Authority's annual Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer referred Members to the Station Modernisation Programme, the status had changed from red to amber reflecting the progress made over the last quarter. The construction contract had been signed for the fire station at Congleton and work was due to commence in September 2023. The costs for the build contract at Macclesfield and Wilmslow were expected by the end of July 2023.

He provided an update on the Road Safety Strategy Plan Cheshire. An agreement was now in place with an external company to develop the road safety strategy.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Prevention Department Review was on schedule and that staff engagement had been completed.

A Member requested to be kept informed in relation to the Road Safety Strategy Plan for Cheshire. The Chief Fire Officer gave reassurance to the Members that the project had not held up the Service's road safety projects.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Programme Report – Quarter 4, 2022-23 be noted.

4 UNITARY PERFORMANCE GROUPS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

The Head of Service Delivery introduced the report, which provided an update on the initiatives supported and funded by the Unitary Performance Groups (UPGs) during 2022-23.

He outlined that the UPG meetings provided an opportunity for Members to engage with the Service to develop initiatives that assisted with improving performance and outcomes for the communities within each unitary area. The UPGs had a budget of £10,000 per year allocated to enable them to fund a range of activities to help drive down nuisance fire setting and enhance community engagement.

The Head of Service Delivery explained that some initiatives were low cost in monetary terms but of high value to the community, this included Walking With Heros which provided high visibility jackets to children when on a walk, and the annual Macmillan coffee morning.

A Member asked if future reports could explain why the projects were undertaken and highlight the benefit to the community.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Unitary Performance Groups Annual Report 2022-23 be noted.

5 ANNUAL TRAINING PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23

The Group Manager, Operational Training and Assurance provided Members with an update on the training arrangements and performance throughout the training year 2022-23.

He drew Members' attention to the BA Day 2 Refresher course, current status red. Six courses had been postponed due to training conducted in preparation for potential industrial action. He assured Members that since the report was produced the training was now up to date.

The Group Manager referenced the Hazardous Materials Training course that had a red status. 43 out of 57 firefighters attended during the year. The 14 staff that missed the training during the year had since completed the training.

The Group Manager highlighted the Emergency Fire Appliance Drivers Training. He explained the status remained red. He outlined the reasons and assured Members that the training team were working hard to rectify the situation including performing a driving instructor review to recruit and retain more staff.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Training Performance Report 2022-23 be noted.

6 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (CYP) AND ADULTS, ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

The Group Manager for Prevention introduced the report detailing the safeguarding referrals and improvements that had been made to the safeguarding process.

The Group Manager advised Members that the statistics show that the number of Children and Young People referrals had decreased during 2022-23 when compared with the previous year and this was more in line with the figures from before the Covid Pandemic.

He highlighted that during the reporting period there had been several concerns raised relating to young people which ultimately did not meet the threshold for Children's Social Care intervention. In these instances, support was identified for the individuals and referrals were made to external services such as mental health, drug and alcohol teams.

The Group Manager advised Members that there had been 30 adult safeguarding referrals in 2022-23. Information from Prevention teams had highlighted that post lockdown they were seeing an increase in vulnerabilities identified, including some caused by the cost-of-living crisis.

When the adult safeguarding thresholds were not met, but further intervention or case management work by the Service was required, a Vulnerable Person folder was opened. During 2022-23, there had been 218 Vulnerable Person folders created. This was an increase from 157 folders in the previous year. The most common cause was high risk smoking, low-level hoarding issues and lower-level self-neglect.

A Member questioned who referred a case if multiple agencies attend an incident. The Group Manager advised that our team would report their concerns to social care, because it was preferable for an issue to be reported multiple times than not reported at all.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Safeguarding Children and Young People (CYP) and Adults Annual Report 2022-23 be noted.

7 PROSECUTIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

The Group Manager for Protection introduced the report which presented an update on Cheshire Fire Authority's prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 during the financial year 2022-23. During the reporting period there have been three successful prosecutions.

He summarised the successful prosecution cases and advised there were currently seven cases in various stages of the prosecution process. These include three

cases going to trial in the Crown Court and four cases with suspects under investigation.

The Group Manager drew Members' attention to the cost implications of prosecuting cases. The Service may be awarded costs to cover its solicitor's fees and staff time, however this was not guaranteed. The Service maintains a prosecution reserve of circa £300k. The Beechmere Retirement Village prosecution was expected to be the most expensive prosecution to date, due to the complexity of the case and the need for significant legal support.

A Member questioned how the Service decides which non-domestic premises they inspect. The Protection Group Manager advised that there were approximately 37,000 premises across Cheshire and each was given a risk score based on certain attributes such as type of business activity and occupancy. Hotels and hospitals were regularly inspected because they were deemed as high risk due to people sleeping in them that were not familiar with the premises.

A Member asked if the sister properties of Beechmere, located in Ellesmere Port, Middlewich, Wilmslow and Winsford were now compliant with fire regulations. The Group Manager advised that remediation work had been carried out at all the sites and they were now compliant.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the contents of the Prosecutions Annual Report 2022-23 be noted.

8 HMICFRS 2021 INSPECTION ACTION PLAN CLOSEDOWN

The Group Manager for Organisational Performance and Planning introduced the report which presented Members with an update in relation to the action plan created in response to the identified 'Areas for Improvement' from the 2021 HMICFRS inspection report relating to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Group Manager advised that two actions were still outstanding:-

- Responding to Fires and other Emergencies: The service should ensure it had an effective system for learning from operational incidents; and
- Suggestion: Responding to Fires and other Emergencies.

The Group Manager informed Members that a new HMICFRS inspection was completed in March. The Service received its 'Hot Debrief' and early indications were that inspectors were pleased with the progress made in most areas with the exception of the Areas For Improvement covering operational learning and debriefing.

The 2023 HMICFRS' inspection report would be published in August 2023 and a new action plan relating to any Areas For Improvement would be produced following publication. The outstanding actions from Round 2 would be added into the new action plan.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the contents of the action plan were noted; and

[2] Members agree the closedown of the action plan with the two open items to be monitored alongside the action plan that would be developed in response to the report issued following the 2023 inspection.

9 ANNUAL ROAD SAFETY REPORT 2022-23

The Road Safety Officer introduced the report which provided an update on the targeted road safety activities 2022-23. Activities were delivered in support of the multi-agency road safety plans of the local authorities and Cheshire Police and were designed to reduce road traffic collisions, deaths and injuries. He highlighted the achievements of the Service at events throughout the year.

The data showed that the four main road users risk groups in Cheshire were, car occupants 35%, motorcyclist 26%, cyclist 16% and pedestrians 15%. During 2022-23 a total of 390 road traffic collisions required the attendance of the Service. This was a 3.6% increase on the 2021/22 totals. Over the previous four years 2019-22, data indicates that fatal incidents had reduced by 40% but serious injuries had increased by 14%.

The Road Safety Officer highlighted the achievements of the targeted road safety activities throughout the year, including TyreSafe Winter Driving campaign, Brake Road Safety Week and Operation Close Pass. He advised Members that they were more than welcome to attend these events.

A Member asked if 20 mph zones had reduced the fatality figures. The Road Safety Officer advised that the Service did not have data on 20 mph zones. He also noted that not every Local Authority utilise them and the Service had minimal influence with partner organisations on speed restrictions.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Annual Road Safety Report 2022-23 be noted.

10 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The table included those items that have been identified/agreed to-date. Members are asked to agree any additional items at the end of the meeting which need to be added to the programme.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Fire Standards Implementation Review to be added to the forward plan for September's Performance and Overview Committee Meeting; and

[2] the Forward Work Plan 2022-23 be noted.

