



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday, 24 August 2016 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Service Headquarters,  
Winsford, Cheshire at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors P Harris, J Mercer, D Bailey, H Deynem, L Morgan and M Simon  
Independent member: A Ruddy

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A Recording of Meeting**

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

**B Chair and Membership of Committee**

Members were asked to note the appointment of a Chair, Deputy Chair and membership of the Performance and Overview Committee for 2016/2017, as agreed by the Fire Authority at its annual meeting on 15 June 2016 and listed below:

Councillors:

P Harris – Chair  
J Mercer – Deputy Chair  
D Bailey  
H Deynem  
L Morgan  
J Saunders  
M Simon

Substitutes:

D Marren  
R Polhill

Independent (non-elected) member: A Ruddy

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] Membership of the Committee and appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair be noted.**

**C Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Saunders.

**D Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

**E Minutes of Performance and Overview Committee**

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee held on Wednesday 13 April 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**F Minutes of Policy Committee**

**RESOLVED: That**

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

**2 QUARTER 1 - FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2016-17**

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the Service's financial performance (for the first quarter of 2016/17) and progress against the 2016-17 Service plans.

The Head of Finance summarised the financial performance and drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 of the report which contained information on the anticipated outturn for each department compared to the original budget. He expanded on additional costs pressures that had arisen in Operational Policy and Assurance (OPA) due to the provision of additional swift water rescue training and the employment of an additional technical support officer. He highlighted the pay budget underspend in Protection, which would be offset by some anticipated costs relating to training for the Primary Authority Scheme. He also referred Members to the savings from the SMT restructure and the income received from Cumbria (£60k) as reimbursement for the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive acting as Chief Fire Officer for Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CuFRS).

The Head of Finance informed Members of items which would be funded from reserves, including the apprenticeship scheme, Blue Light Collaboration (BLC), and the Prince's Trust Programme. He advised Members that whilst Appendix 1 showed an overall underspend of £119k it was likely that this situation would change as the financial year progressed.

The Head of Finance referred Members to the Authority's capital programme, detailed in Appendix 2 of the report. He explained that there was a projected overspend on the Emergency Response Programme of around £270k and expanded on the reasons for this overspend. He informed Members that the overall overspend remained well within the contingency agreed when the Authority approved the final capital expenditure. He also gave further information and updates on other approved schemes detailed in Appendix 2.

Finally, the Head of Finance drew Members' attention to the total amount of debt due to the Authority at the end of Quarter 1, which was £189k as of June 2016.

He explained to Members that the debtor's position was manageable and that the majority of outstanding debts would be paid as debtors were mainly public service bodies.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided further information on progress against plans and drew Members' attention to the update on the firefighter apprenticeship scheme. He informed Members that 13 candidates have been appointed; 38% of these were female which he stated was positive news for the Service. He also expanded on other areas referred to in the report, which indicated good performance progress overall for most of the Service's schemes and programmes.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive concluded by providing an overview of the corporate performance scorecard (Appendix 3) and explained that the information reflected the Quarter 1 position against targets set at the start of the year for the organisation's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). He expanded on the work that had been undertaken by the Service in response to targets that were not met.

A Member queried a decrease in public satisfaction levels for response times to incidents. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed Members that the fluctuation in public satisfaction levels was normal throughout each quarter and that figures still remained high. A Member also queried whether the Blue Light Collaboration (BLC) Programme had impacted on sickness levels within the organisation. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive explained to Members that sickness levels had not increased as a result of the (BLC) Programme and that any concerns from employees were addressed through several communication/ engagement channels set up by the Service and by individual one to one sessions with the appointed BLC HR Adviser.

Members requested a further breakdown of working days lost to injury. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive confirmed that the figure in Appendix 3 included workplace and non-workplace injuries. A Member also queried whether the Service recorded the waiting times for smoke detectors to be replaced following a request from the public. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a record was kept of waiting times and informed the Committee of historic problems with certain makes of smoke detectors and also the procedures the Service followed concerning eligibility for free smoke detectors.

A Member also queried whether more information could be provided on the number of work-related incidents for future reports. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive confirmed that reports submitted to the Service Health, Safety and Welfare Committee contained more detailed figures and that this could be provided for Members.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Quarter 1 Financial and Performance Review 2015-16 be noted.**

**3 QUARTERLY INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN - Q4 (2015/16) & Q1 (2016/17)  
PROGRESS REPORT**

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive introduced Kevin Lloyd, the Authority's appointed Internal Auditor from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), who was in attendance at the meeting and would be presenting this report to the Committee.

The Auditor advised Members that this report, prepared by the MIAA, provided an update on the progress made in respect of Quarter 4 of the 2015-16 internal audit plan and Quarter 1 of the 2016-17 internal audit plan.

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

A Member queried when the next health and safety audit review would take place. The Auditor informed the Committee that the last review of health and safety had taken place in 2014-15 and that risk assessments were ongoing. He also suggested that a future review could be considered in the plan for next year.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Quarterly Internal Audit Plan Progress Report be noted.**

**4 ANNUAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REPORT**

The Policy and Inclusion Manager presented the report which provided an update to Members on the key issues identified from the Service's Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2015-16 (Appendix 1).

He explained that the Equality Task Group (ETG) had evolved into the Equality Steering Group (ESG) in March 2016 to enhance the performance of the group. He also informed Members that this was the second year that the monitoring report had been presented in the format received by the Committee and that additional information had been included in the report in relation to staff training, disciplinary procedures, volunteers and on-call recruitment.

The report detailed the key activities that the Service had delivered concerning community engagement, highlighting the impact of work undertaken with specific groups within Cheshire to address issues raised in the report. The Policy and Inclusion Manager also informed Members of the positive action campaigns that were underway to encourage individuals from groups which were currently under-represented within the Services to apply for operational roles.

A Member asked if the increased recruitment of females within the apprenticeship roles was a direct result of the positive recruitment campaigns undertaken by the Service. The Policy and Inclusion Manager explained that these campaigns had actively targeted female groups and could have played a role in the improvements made in encouraging females to apply. Members also queried how proactive the Services was when trying to engage with minority communities. The Policy and

Inclusion Manager informed Members that the Service was increasing the promotion of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) within minority communities and welcomed any proposals from Members that would assist in reaching these communities.

Members requested that contextual data be provided concerning the demographic target used by the Service so that a comparison could be drawn between that and the figures presented to Members within the report. The Policy and Inclusion Manager informed Members that the Service was in the process of drawing up a demographic picture of Cheshire that would provide this information.

A Member referred to the statistics within the report on disclosure of sexual orientation by (CFRS) employees and queried whether the Service could provide a breakdown between support staff and operational staff. The Policy and Inclusion Manager informed Members that 19% of employees had declined to state their sexual orientation, but that there was a continuing decrease in the number of individuals declining to state their sexual orientation. He also informed Members that a higher percentage of operational staff had declined to state their sexual orientation than support staff and that further work was being undertaken to reduce those figures.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Equality Monitoring Report 2015-16 be noted.**

## **5 UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS PERFORMANCE REVIEW (2015/16)**

The Head of Protection introduced the report to Members which provided a review of the Unwanted Fire Signal (UwFS) performance in 2015/16. He brought Members' attention to the number of automatic fire alarms (AFAs) attended by the Service over the last 5 years and the main causes of AFAs in non-domestic premises throughout 2015-16. He also explained to Members the impact of responding to UwFS's on service delivery. It was noted that a proposal outlining the options available to reduce activity further would be submitted to Members for consideration at the Planning Day in September.

Members queried whether the Service could introduce a financial penalty for repeat neglect of fire alarms in commercial premises. The Head of Protection informed Members that if commercial premises hit a specific trigger point then a member of the Protection team would go out and inspect the premises. Any recurring issues would be addressed through the enforcement process. He added that, although other Services were looking into charging for UwFS, it was not currently being pursued by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Unwanted Fire Signals Performance Review (2015/16) be noted.**

## 6 **PRINCE'S TRUST FUNDING UPDATE**

The Prince's Trust Project Coordinator introduced the report to Members, which highlighted the current funding issues within the Prince's Trust Team (PTT) Programme. She informed Members that the Government had commissioned a review of further education facilities with a view to merging colleges nationally which would potentially result in South Cheshire, West Cheshire, and Mid-Cheshire colleges merging with Warrington Collegiate.

The Prince's Trust Project Coordinator informed Members of the effect of Ofsted ratings on sub-contracting and the impact of changes to local college provisions on the Service's PTT Programme. She also expanded on the new opportunities for funding the PTT Programme that were being pursued with colleges and unitary performance areas within Cheshire.

A Member queried the variance across the seven teams within the county and why the Service had struggled to recruit enough attendees for all of the courses organised. The Prince's Trust Coordinator informed Members that the Prince's Trust (PT) team were finding it more difficult to recruit 16-18 year olds due to the legal requirement for that age group to stay within further education. She explained that there had also been an increase in the number of more complex cases in respect of the young people participating in the programme and this impacted on retention rates for the courses.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the funding regime was very complex and that contract restrictions also made the process more difficult. He explained that the internal audit report had highlighted the financial risk involved and that the Service was aware of these risks and would mitigate against them where possible.

### **RECOMMENDED: That**

**[1] the Prince's Trust funding update report be noted.**

## 7 **ANNUAL REPORT - ON THE STREETS YOUTH WORK**

The Prince's Trust Project Coordinator introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the work undertaken by the 'On the Streets' (OTS) team over the last 12 months. She summarised the local engagement that had occurred with the OTS team in each of the unitary areas within Cheshire. She also informed Members of requests made by the young people the team were working with concerning issues within their community.

A Member queried why any performance measures or outcomes were not included in the report. The Prince's Trust Project Co-ordinator noted the request and would ensure that performance information was provided for future reports. It was also noted that the Unitary Performance Groups held more detailed discussions which included feedback on local initiatives and requests for local engagement.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the 'On the Streets' Youth Work annual report be noted.**

**8 BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION UPDATE**

A verbal update was delivered by Area Manager Keith Brooks which provided Members with the latest information on the Blue Light Collaboration Programme. He advised Members that a consultant had been brought in to advise the Service on the next steps to take concerning the Service's training facilities. He informed Members of the three options, and variations within these options, that had been recommended by the consultant. He also highlighted the impact of the options on the Service and the overall BLC programme.

Members would receive a more detailed presentation on the proposals to discuss at the planning day in September and a formal report would be submitted to the Authority meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

**9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The forward work programme for 2016-17 was considered by Members and there were no further agenda items identified to add to the programme.