

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023
REPORT OF: HEAD OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ASSURANCE
AUTHOR: SM OLIVER TREMAIN

SUBJECT: NORTH WEST FIRE CONTROL,
ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Purpose of Report

1. To inform members about the performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC) during the year 2022-23 (1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023).

Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the performance information relating to NWFC.

Background

2. This report is based on NWFC quarterly performance reports, and data generated from Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) Fire and Research Analysis team.

Information

Report Content

3. The key performance measures contained within this report reviews NWFC's call handling performance, costs of service against demand, training and exercising, and business continuity.

Call handling performance

Call Challenging

4. Control Room Operatives (CRO's) are trained to challenge specific call types and ask additional questions to identify whether FRS attendance is required. These include Automatic Fire Alarms, (AFA's) Animal Rescues, Bonfires and Gaining Entry incidents. The average percentage of calls challenged, but not mobilised to was 43.25% for the reporting period.

5. Table 1 below shows a breakdown by quarter of the number of calls that were challenged for all four Fire & Rescue Services (FRS's).

Table 1

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total Average
% Successfully challenged/ not mobilised	45%	44%	42%	42%	43.25%

6. The success of the call challenge protocols introduced by the Service has prompted neighbouring FRS's to implement similar arrangements.

Time to answer Emergency Calls

7. A national target was set by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), and it is against this target that NWFC has been reporting. A target of 95% of emergency calls should be answered in 10 seconds, or less.

8. Performance for all four FRS's is shown in the table below:

Table 2

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Average Time to Answer (sec)	6	7.6	5.7	5.1
Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds	94.68%	82.92%	87.46%	89.68%

9. A significant proportion of the calls where NWFC failed to meet the 10s standard was between Q2 to Q4 where a dip in performance below 90% was observed. NWFC changed systems to LifeX in June 2022. A trial not to use the Automatic Call Distribution tool (ACD) was implemented, however once this dip in performance was established the Senior Management Team at NWFC made the decision to reintroduce the ACD tool on 5/9/23. The data to see if this has been successful is yet to be released.

10. NWFC has established that for Quarter 4 there is missing call data, which their data extraction software is unable to retrieve. This data does not correspond with previous quarter figures. This has been reported to their software contractors. This issue has had no impact on service delivery during the period. This connection failure has now been resolved; however historic data is unretrievable.

Time of Call Answer to Time of Alerting the First Resource

11. The performance standard for alerting resources to be mobilised from the time of call is 90 seconds.
12. Performance is shown in the table below (average in seconds) for Cheshire Incidents only. The table below shows a measure of all 'attended' incidents. This data has been produced from CFRS Fire Research and Analysis team.

Table 3

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ave
Ave for life risk incidents	98	100	88.5	83.5	92.50
Fires	73	78	78	72	75.25
Special Service Calls – RTC's	116	118	103	101	109.50

13. The data shows significant improvements for NWFC mobilising to RTC's this year, with an average time of 109.50 seconds. This is down from 118 seconds during 2021-22 providing an average 8.5 second reduction.
14. CFRS have introduced a new quarterly scrutiny process to improve the monitoring of NWFC performance.
- All CRO's have 2 call audits per month.
 - A review of all incidents where there are more than 6 appliances. This is to ensure key station and zonal depletions are being managed correctly and CFRS are providing the necessary support.
 - A review of both the 10s time to answer and 90s time to mobilise resources, for the quarter'

15. Improvements to performance processes

The following describe changes designed to improve performance.

- An incident tag has been placed on the mobilising system. This tag will require a CRO to provide a reason the 90s standard was breached. A quarterly report will be run as part of the quarterly scrutiny process.
- CRO training has been updated to reinforce the two-stage mobilisation process. Stage 1 is to mobilise to the address and Stage 2 is obtaining and passing additional information.
- The introduction of the LifeX system has improved location identification.
- The introduction of What3Words in CAD.
- If the caller is completely lost the CRO's have now been asked to use 999eye to use the caller's phone GPS.

16. It should be noted that different incident types require differing amounts of information to be obtained during the call handling processes to ensure correct mobilisation.

Cost of Service

17. The cost of the service provided by NWFC is paid for in proportions agreed by the FRS's when NWFC was established. (See Annual Percentage Cost per FRS in Table 4).

18. Table 4 presents the percentage of all emergency call activity in each quarter per FRS area and then contains the overall percentage for the year compared to the cost paid by each FRS.

Table 4

	Cheshire	Cumbria	Greater Manchester	Lancashire
Q1	14.99%	7.41%	42.94%	34.66%
Q2	17.07%	7.68%	41.38%	33.87%
Q3	15.61%	8.50%	40.91%	34.98%
Q4	17.19%	8.92%	40.58%	33.31%
Overall Average	16.22%	8.13%	41.45%	34.20%
Annual Percentage Cost per FRS	18%	8%	48.5%	25.5%

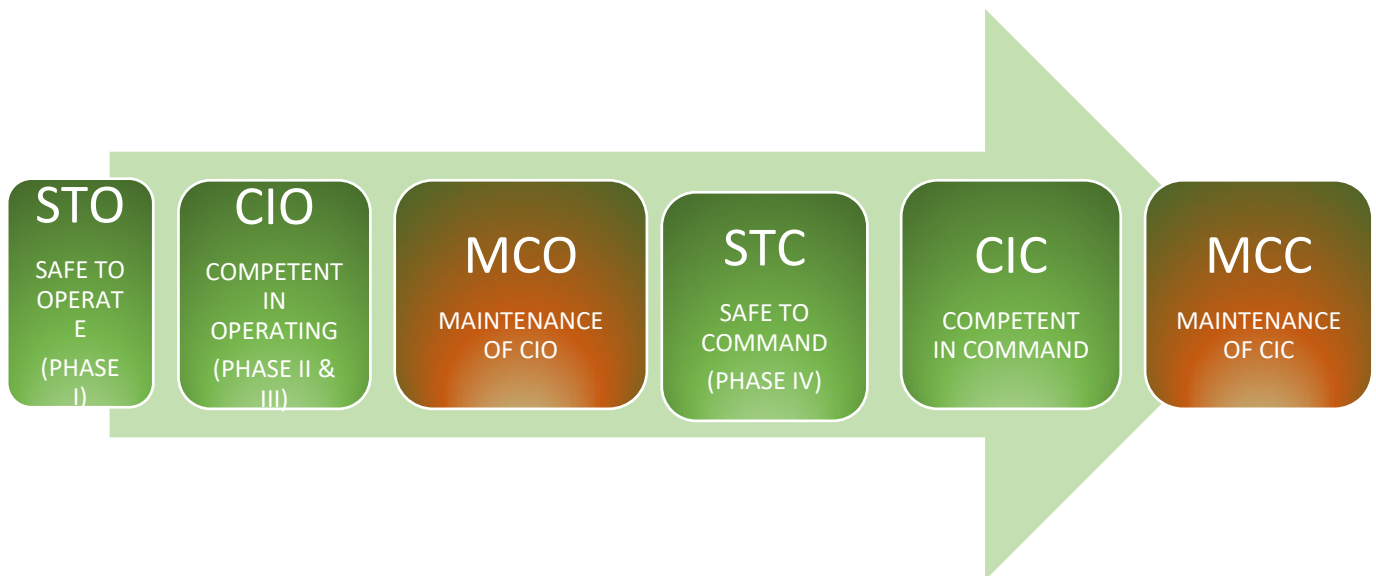
New Technologies and Delivery of Projects

19. **999eye:** is a technical solution where NWFC can use a caller's smart mobile phone to view the incident being reported. Benefits include improving NWFC's understanding of the nature of the call, enhancing the response if required. A data agreement is now in place with the four FRS and NWFC to access footage. The next phase is when the licence is renewed in October 2023, where it will become a shared resource. The total cost of £30,000 will be split evenly across the 4 FRS, seeing an annual spend for each FRS of £7,500. A budget bid for this resource has been submitted.
20. **Fire Survival Guidance (FSG)** An electronic solution using Sharepoint has been created by Merseyside FRS to enhance the ability to co-ordinate major incidents such as high-rise fires, where there are multiple calls received at NWFC from people in need of rescue. NWFC and the FRS can update the shared spreadsheet, and as this is a live document, it can be seen immediately on the incident ground so Incident Commanders can target a response in real time. This will build on the implemented evacuation process based on learning from the Grenfell Tower fire. This system is being explored currently by all four FRS and is expected to be implemented soon.
21. **What3Words:** What3 Words has now been integrated within the CAD system at NWFC which is enabling quicker, more accurate mobilising.
22. **Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) procurement:** A new CAD system at NWFC is currently under review. Part of the tendering process will involve inviting potential contractors to hold a bidders' conference where they can explain what benefits their solution has to offer. The project has been added to the OPA Departmental Plan and is managed by the Cheshire Planning System. CFRS staff are also embedded within the NWFC project team .
23. **Bariatric Call Challenge:** CFRS have worked closely with our Medical Director and the other three FRS to produce an agreed framework to challenge attendance at non-emergency bariatric related incidents. CFRS will always attend any bariatric life risk incidents.
24. **CFRS New Resources integrated into the CAD.**
 - **Wildfire:** Poynton and Bollington are now on-line with additional skill attributes pertaining to Wildfire. This involves the integration of the All-Terrain vehicle and wildfire units into the CAD.
 - **Scorpion:** The High Reach Extending Turret Fire Engine was introduced at Macclesfield and uses the latest technology to enhance Fire Fighting tactics and Firefighter safety.

- **Water Bowser:** The Water Bowser provides 9000lts water to support various incident types including – Wildfires, incidents of remote locations and Electric Vehicles as a few examples.

Training, Exercises and Debriefs

25. People, Development and Assurance Programme (PDAP) – NWFC have implemented a new competency criteria for each stage of development based on the Fire Standard for Fire Control, National Operational Guidance (NOG) and National Operational Learning (NOL).



26. NWFC attended CFRS Training Centre to undertake level 1 Incident Command training in the Incident Command Suites.
27. The new JESIP training principles have been embedded within the control room at NWFC. A bespoke NWFC JESIP trainer co-ordinates with the Service JESIP based principles.
28. The Service has built on this training in the organisations implementation of change based on the Kerlake recommendations. The Service has planned, implemented and delivered bespoke MTA exercises in phases 1 and 2. Phase 3 will deliver four no-notice MTA scenarios for all the NWFC teams (consolidating the aforementioned training); this will culminate in a major live scenario. All the exercises are a tri-service collaboration with Cheshire Police and North West Ambulance Service, and for the major live exercise with the Tactical Firearms team.
29. A collaborate North West regional high-rise exercise in Merseyside was undertaken to test the current Immediate Building Evacuation (IBE) Fire Survival Guidance training. This involved crews from Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside FRS testing the current fire survival guidance communication with NWFC.

30. CFRS is holding, where possible, all structured debriefs at NWFC, with appliances attending NWFC to participate. This is to improve NWFC representation and will maximise organisational learning.
31. Proposed training 2023-24
- Water Survival Guidance is currently being explored with the intention of introduction at NWFC and across all four FRS. Initial meetings have taken place and current guidance will be aligned with the national coastguard survival guidance.
 - Fire Behaviour training for CRO is currently being developed at CFRS using the state-of-the-art Incident Command Training suite.
 - A bespoke training package to upskill L2 officers to support NWFC as 'Operational Support' during major incidents and spate conditions. CFRS are leading on developing this package.

Business Continuity

32. Two full Business Continuity (BC) exercises have been carried out at NWFC during the reporting period. Both exercises took place whilst there was a complete shutdown of the mobilising system, necessitated by a requirement to complete essential updates.
33. As a result of HMICFRS feedback NWFC and the Business Continuity planning group undertook a full fallback exercise to secondary control at Stretford Fire Station in February 2023.
34. The Loss of the 999 Service. This was a national issue, as highlighted in the national and NWFC debriefs. Agreed actions are to converge BC Plans across NWFC and the four FRS. The Service and NWFC are awaiting national direction for use of 101 or 0800 as fallback numbers.

Financial Implications

35. There are no financial implications arising from the presentation of this annual report.

Legal Implications

36. None resulting from the information in the report. An Agreement for Service exists between the Authority and NW Fire Control Ltd. This provides a framework for managing the relationship.

Equality and Diversity Implications

37. Equality Impact Assessment for the 999eye project has been undertaken and approved by the Equality and Inclusion Manager.

Environmental Implications

38. None

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE