



**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.