

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 11TH SEPTEMBER 2024
REPORT OF: HEAD OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
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SUBJECT: PROGRAMME REPORT – QUARTER 1 2024-25

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update on the Service's key programmes and projects, aligned to delivering the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2028.

Recommended: That members of the Board:

- [1] note the content of the report, and take assurance on the reported progress/status, which is being closely tracked and monitored via the Service Improvement Department, and where appropriate, has dedicated project management resource allocated to ensure successful delivery.

Background

2. This report forms part of the Fire Authority's quarterly performance reporting cycle, which also includes reports on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), financial performance, and delivery against the HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan.

Information

3. Progress on delivery of the programmes and projects is reported in the form of a quarterly health report. The Programme Health Report for Quarter 1 2024-25 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Financial Implications

4. Specific financial and budget impacts are detailed in the finance report presented separately by the Head of Finance.

Legal Implications

5. There are no issues to report that impact upon the Service's ability to meet its statutory or other legal obligations.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6. Programmes and projects are required to have Equality Impact Assessments completed in accordance with the approved Project Management Framework.

Environmental Implications

7. Programmes and projects are individually assessed for environmental implications, in accordance with the Service's Project Management Framework and the Environment Policy Statement

APPENDIX 1 - Quarter 1 - Programme Health Report 2024-25

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE



Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service

Programme Health Report

Quarter 1 2024-2025

Status Key	
	The project is on track and progressing as planned, with no significant concerns.
	The project is at risk of missing some targets but is being managed within approved limits. This could be due to delays, budget issues, resource challenges, scope concerns, or increasing risk. Some corrective actions may be needed.
	The project is encountering difficulties and needs immediate attention. This could be due to delays, budget issues, scope changes, or high risk. Senior management support may be required.
	The project is completed and entering the final phase. The project is being managed to an orderly conclusion.

Project	Status	Project	Status
1648 - Emergency Response Proposals		TBC - Replacement of Fire Stations	
1549 - High Rise Sprinkler Campaign		1633 - Station Modernisation	
1621 - Reduction in False Alarms in Domestic Premises		1563 - Fire Service Housing	
1568 - Road Safety Strategy		TBC - Sale of Fire Houses in Stockton Heath	
1619 - Prevention Review		1591 - Microsoft 365 Implementation	
1611 - Water Safety Awareness		1642 - SharePoint online and Teams	
1635 - Sadler Road Site (Phase 2)		1614 - Welfare/Contaminants Unit	

Response

1648 Emergency Response Proposals - *Following the approval of the CRMP, the project includes: changing the way we measure response times; converting four on-call fire engines to FT crewing during weekdays; converting Knutsford's fire engine from On-Call to day crewing; reorganising daytime fire cover in Warrington; and implementing the outcomes of the specials review.*

Work continues to be progressed at pace.

Redeployment procedures for wholetime and on-call staff affected by changes were agreed with the FBU in April 2024 (including 50% uplift to the on-call severance package).

Collective agreement for Weekday Crewing was agreed at the beginning of June 2024.

Preferencing for the new duty systems closed at the end of June 2024. Work is now underway to review all of the returned forms

Review of the on-call retainer fee is progressing, with a separate workstream established to implement the outcomes.

Specials Review completed and work to review each individual vehicle movement, including any associated training requirements, is underway

Prevention & Protection

1549 High Rise Sprinkler Campaign - *Retrofitting of sprinklers within Cheshire's high-rise residential blocks and promoting work with Local Authorities to identify the need for sprinklers at planning approval stage.*

Installation of sprinklers at Kingsway House, Warrington has been delivered This installation makes it the 18th high-rise building in Cheshire installed with sprinklers.

This project is entering close down, which will see an evaluation and a lessons learnt exercise completed.

1621 Reduction in False Alarms in Domestic Premises - *work to reduce the number of false alarms we receive from domestic premises.*

Letters providing guidance on how to reduce false alarms have been issued to 48 registered landlords with premises in Cheshire.

CFRS website has been updated to reflect additional information regarding false alarms.

Social media campaign has been launched, with support from the communications and engagement team to help monitor reach and response.

Fire safety audits in identified premises have resulted in 2x Notification of Deficiencies and 3x Action Plans

Working with system administrators to extract information from Saffire (i.e. number of safe and well visits) to help evaluate impact. Awaiting initial report and findings

Awaiting refresher training to be carried out by Organisational Intelligence regarding the use of the Incident Recording System. A workstream regarding identification of sheltered housing premises for recording on IRS will support this training objective

1568 Road Safety Strategy - *Increased work with public sector partners to create a strategic road safety plan that aims to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads. Widening road safety activity to meet identified risks.*

Agilysis have been commissioned to develop Cheshire's Road Strategy. A strategy first draft is expected to be received by January 2025 with a view to have a final version ready for publication by June 2025.

Strategy development will consist of two phases: 1) Review and analysis of data, demographics and national best practices, and 2) Bespoke interviews with partners to discuss progress to-date, what's working well, where improvements could be made, what are some of the barriers.

The strategy will be delivered in two forms – a formal strategy document for partners and a forward-facing document for public.



1619 Prevention Department Review - *Review of Prevention department, to ensure that staffing, remuneration and activity levels maximise our effectiveness and efficiency to deliver prevention activities in line with our CRMP objectives. Target date of December 2024.*

Implementation of new structure came into effect 01/07/2024, impacting 67 members of staff.

There are some ongoing recruitment processes that will continue during August into early September, due to annual leave.

It is anticipated that the department will operating as Business as Usual early in Quarter 3 2024/25

Head of Department and Functional leads are meeting on a weekly basis to mitigate any risks associated with the transition period and regular work is ongoing with the People and Organisational Development team.

1611 Raise Awareness of Water Safety - *IRMP 2022-23 project for the prevention department to determine how the Service raises awareness of water safety across Cheshire.*

Project has delivered all key milestones. A Project Closedown report will be presented to Board in Quarter 2 2024-2025.

Estates & Facilities

1635 Sadler Road Site (phase 2) - project to re-establish CFRS Headquarters at Sadler Road site, Winsford.

Phase one to relocate staff, including Principal Officers, from Clemonds Hey to the first floor at Sadler Road is complete, albeit with a few minor snagging activities to conclude.

Scoping of phase two (ground floor renovations) is underway with a small working group established to consider all aspects including potential enhancements to communal areas, upgrading audio visual equipment in the lecture theatres, and exploring the possibility of commissioning works through the current arrangements for the modernisation of Winsford Fire Station. Proposals are to be discussed via Land and Property Working Group, with any associated funding requests feeding into the budget planning process for 2025/26

The issue of car parking has previously been discussed but has been put on hold due to costs. This issue will be revisited in the Autumn, as part of broader discussions around capital spend and future priorities.

Brief for the development of a memorial area at the front of HQ has been clarified and the project group is progressing the scope of the design in line with agreed timescales.

Replacement of Fire Stations - long-term project to address those fire stations identified as being in poor condition and requiring a complete rebuild.

Conversations with Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) have progressed in relation to Ellesmere Port. The Council have secured 'Levelling-up Funding' through central government to facilitate acquiring and preparing sites for housing, as part of their strategy to regenerate the town centre. Acquisition of the site where the fire station is currently situated isn't included in this phase of funding however there may be some flexibility in the programme to request a change. CFRS remain in talks with Northwest Ambulance Service about a possible joint facility, whether that be on the exiting sites or an alternative. CWaC's Regeneration Team are expected to share with the Service a short-list of potential future sites by the end of August, which will enable works around feasibility to progress.

A meeting with Warrington Borough Council is scheduled for the end of July with the view to shaping up some outline plans for future development. Planning for both Ellesmere Port and Warrington Fire Stations will be managed through the Land and Property Working Group.

1633 Station Modernisation - *multi-year programme to modernise 21/28 fire stations across the estate*

Modernisation works completed to time at Congleton and Macclesfield (Phase 3 of the programme, Year 4 of delivery). Wilmslow, the remaining station from Phase 3 is due to complete in early September.

On 26th June 2024, Fire Authority members authorised works to commence at Knutsford fire station, as part of Phase 4. Work is due to commence in August 2024. Costings for the remaining two stations (Frodsham and Knutsford) are expected at the end of August and will be presented to the Fire Authority on 26th September 2024.

It is highly likely that Phase 4 of the Programme (Knutsford, Frodsham and Winsford) will use up all the remaining budget (£5m). Therefore, further capital will need to be allocated to complete the final phase (Phase 5 - Nantwich, Poynton, Stockton Heath & Malpas). Officers are due to present a further paper to members

1563 Fire Service Housing - *5-year project to review the Service's housing stock, define an agreed standard for their condition and deliver a programme of improvements to bring them up-to standard and help re-establish a planned programme of maintenance for future years.*

Years one to four (2019-2024) of the housing improvement programme have been completed, with a significant amount of work focusing on replacing roofing, kitchens and bathrooms across the estate.

A schedule of work for Year 5 (2024-2025) has been drafted and shared with the contractors (SBS) for approval and confirmation of a price for completion.

It is forecasted that at the end of Year 5, there will still be a large amount of work to complete to bring the houses up to standard. It is anticipated that this work will cost in the region of £680k. The risk of the project not delivering to budget has been escalated through Senior Leadership Team and will form part of a wider discussion around future capital spend in the autumn.

Sale of Fire Houses in Stockton Heath - *project to sell the housing stock in Stockton Heath, in line with timescales for delivering the emergency response proposals.*

Procurement have issued an invitation to tender for the sale of all nine houses. Three local estate agents have responded and are in the process of submitting valuations for the first tranche of vacant houses. Decision to proceed with preferred agent will be taken through Land & Property Working Group.

Digital & Information Technology

1591 Implementation of Microsoft 365 - *project to deploy the M365 Platform, giving staff access to a range of cloud-based applications such as Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, MS Forms, Power BI etc.*

M365 Platform has been fully deployed across the organisation.

Experiencing some issues with Azure Virtual Desktop, which have been raised through staff feedback. Project team currently looking into these issues and exploring possible solutions to improve the user experience.

Introduction of MS Forms is progressing. A register of Forms to be used by the Service has been created, approvals and governance process in development along with associated policy. Supporting communications on the use of Forms being prepared for launch in September 2024.

Project Initiation Document (PID) for Power BI has been developed for approval. Potential risk around capacity to deliver this project within current resource, which is currently being explored within the Service Improvement department.

1642 SharePoint Online and Teams - *A project to manage the implementation of SharePoint Online and Team sites for the Service*

The project has 6 key work streams:

1) Creation of clear controls and governance for SharePoint and Team sites

Register of SharePoint sites established.

Naming convention & site request form developed.

Intranet pages to house request forms in development, with wider communications to users to follow.

2) Migration of existing SharePoint sites to SharePoint Online

Existing Priority Based Budgeting site migrated on 18.06.24.

Migration of existing Blue Light Collaborative (BLC) site planned 24.07.24

3x additional existing sites identified: Saffire, Firebook and Multi Agency Collaboration

3) Manage the migration of the departmental drives to SharePoint Online (including training of users)

Plan for migrating departmental drives to SharePoint sites is on track, with the Service Improvement department completing the initial migration as a test.

4) Manage the transition of Corporate Docs to a suitable new platform

Working groups established to define the requirements for Corporate Docs and H&S reporting, with possible future solutions being explored

5) Manage the transition of the current Health and Safety Incident reporting form to SharePoint Online

A variety of possible solutions are being reviewed by the Health and Safety Team and a requirements specification agreed.

6) Trial of Team sites for Projects - including a review of other uses for Team Sites that could bring benefit to the Service.

Trial of Teams sites for use as project management hubs is ongoing and will be considered through the Digital and IT Working Group.

Operational Policy Assurance

1614 Welfare/Contaminants Unit - Design and delivery of a new special appliance to assist with welfare and contamination issues for firefighters during operational incidents.

The Welfare Contaminants Unit (WCU) has been discussed at Station Managers Group to help raise its profile, and it has been agreed that Northwest Fire Control will prompt incident commanders to request the unit, as appropriate. The unit has been used 5 times at operational incidents and a number of times during exercises.

A new process has been implemented for when the WCU has been deployed to help increase the level of feedback

The invoicing process from "Units for hire" is working correctly and the servicing of the unit is all working as expected.

Project is to close, with Project Closedown Report presented to Board in Quarter 2 2024-2025

Post Implementation Review Tracker

1588 – Wildfire Capability	Autumn 2024
1577 – Review of the Risk Based Inspection Programme	Autumn 2024
1578 – Expansion of Rapid Response Rescue Units	Autumn 2024