



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday, 28 June 2017 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Headquarters, Cheshire at
10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillors D Bailey, M Biggin, A Dirir, P Harris, J Saunders, T Sherlock and M Simon and independent member A Ruddy

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

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

B Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

Chair and Membership of Committee

Members noted the appointment of a Chair and membership of the Performance and Overview Committee for 2017-18, as agreed by the Fire Authority at its annual meeting on 21 June 2017 and listed below:

Councillors:

P Harris – Chair
T Sherlock – Deputy Chair
D Bailey
M Biggin
A Dirir
J Saunders
M Simon

Substitutes:

H Deynem
D Mahon
R Polhill

Independent Member:

A Ruddy

C Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

D Minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee

RESOLVED: That

[1] the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee held on Wednesday 1st March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL REPORT 2016-17

The Accountant introduced the report which presented the 2016-17 year end review of the Authority's financial position. He informed Members that, from the first to third quarter reviews, the overall forecast revenue underspend was £0.816m. At the end of the fourth quarter there was a further underspend of £1.52m, resulting in an overall underspend of £2.34m for the year. The key areas of underspend arose from Service Delivery, central contingencies and provisions.

The Accountant referred Members to the Authority's capital programme, detailed in Appendix 2 of the report. He highlighted that the year end position of the capital programme showed an overspend of £226k against a total programme of £22.9m. The Accountant informed Members that most of the programme was within budget or forecast to be underspent upon completion with the exception of the Emergency Response Programme (ERP). This showed an overspend of £796k against an overall budget of £17.4m (a 4.6% variance). The key reasons for the overspend were minor re-measurements, unforeseen costs and increased costs of fitting out the new Safety Centre at Lymm. However, the overall package remained within the contingency (£871k) agreed by Members at the outset of the ERP in December 2015.

The Accountant drew Members' attention to the Authority's reserves and the fact that during 2016-17 a net £10.2m of the reserves were utilised to fund the capital programme, including the building of the new fire stations. The remaining £20.1m was earmarked to complete the ERP and support the IRMP and Medium Term Financial Plan. General reserves currently stood at £6.5m (just over 15% of the Authority's net budget). He concluded by referring Members to the note within the report which highlighted that the current figures concerning the general reserve excluded the provisional year end underspend of £1.5m which was subject to audit.

A Member requested that the Committee be briefed regularly concerning financial matters due to uncertainties surrounding the current economic and political climate. The Accountant informed Members that the Authority had entered into a fixed four year settlement with the government and that Members would remain briefed should changes occur.

RESOLVED: That

[1] Members note the 2016-17 year end position.

3 END OF YEAR REVIEW - IRMP PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS 2016-17

The Director of Governance and Commissioning provided Members with an update on the Service's 2016-17 Integrated Risk Management Plan programmes and projects by taking them through the health report, attached as Appendix 1.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning drew Members' attention to the programmes and projects which previously and currently had an amber status within the health report. He informed Members of the progress made in respect of the Blue Light Collaboration Programme and explained the challenges the Service faced concerning the delivery of the programme by April 2018. He referred Members to updates on Penketh and Lymm fire stations, highlighting areas where minor delays and snagging had occurred.

He informed Members that they would receive an update concerning the duty system reviews and on call recruitment situation for Ellesmere Port and Crewe at the Members' Planning Day scheduled for 14th July 2017.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning concluded by referring Members to the update within the report on the Authority's sprinkler campaign. He informed Members that an update would be taken to Members at the Committee's meeting in September to provide a position statement in light of the recent incident at Grenfell Tower in North Kensington. A Member queried whether officers could provide details of the cost of retrospectively fitting sprinklers in properties. It was agreed that this information would be provided at the Committee's meeting in September.

A Member requested clarification concerning the increased risk score for Crewe and Ellesmere Port on call recruitment within the health report. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the increased risk related to the delivery of the project and not to service levels.

A Member welcomed the decision to take further information on the Authority's sprinkler campaign to Members later in the year. He reminded Members that the Service had campaigned for a change in legislation concerning sprinklers and had approached housing associations, landlords and property owners regarding the installation of sprinklers.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Authority had led on the sprinkler campaign and that the Service had offered to jointly fund/subsidise the installation of sprinklers. He informed Members that offers were being renewed and that a budget remained in place. He also advised that the Service did not currently have the legislative right to enter private homes. He reiterated that Members would receive regular updates on the Service's work and progress concerning sprinklers and that Members who sat on the Sprinkler Group would be invited to the Committee's meeting in September.

A Member queried what the Service was currently doing in Cheshire to reassure residents with concerns about the safety of their homes. The Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that the Service had been informed that no cladding of the type fitted at Grenfell Tower had been found on tower blocks in Cheshire. However, there was a need to consider other types of cladding from a fire safety perspective. The Service did not have the facilities to test the cladding. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance informed Members that cladding had been removed from several tower blocks within the area.

A Member queried whether the Service had any legislative powers concerning

compliance and the safety of unregulated, multiple occupancy housing and how the Authority could improve this situation. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Service worked alongside building inspectors and could prosecute if fire safety issues were found in unregistered homes in multiple occupation. He highlighted the importance of local intelligence from Members. He informed Members that information would be provided to Members concerning the work of the Service's fire prevention team.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the End of Year IRMP Programmes and Projects Review for 2016-17 be noted.

4 END OF YEAR REVIEW - PERFORMANCE 2016-17

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the 2016-17 end of year review of performance for each of the Service's key performance indicators (KPIs).

He referred Members to the Corporate Performance Scorecard, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, which reflected the end of year position against targets set and the year-on-year direction of travel for the Service's KPIs. Officers expanded on each of the KPIs, providing further context particularly where targets set had not been achieved. These included the number of recorded deaths and injuries in primary fires, fires in non-domestic premises and on call availability.

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance informed Members that a number of the incidents included in the statistics for the number of deaths in primary fires were still to be considered by the Coroner where cause of death would be confirmed. He also highlighted that there was an indication that some incidents had been miscoded within the data relating to the number of injuries in primary fires and that individuals included in the figures may have received a 'precautionary check' rather than been treated for an injury.

The Head of Service Delivery provided further detail concerning the Service's current performance for on call availability, informing Members that on call availability had increased by 5.8% from Q1 to Q4. He highlighted the performance differences between the different on call shift systems, with nucleus on call appliances achieving 98% availability, primary on call appliances achieving 77% availability and secondary on call appliances achieving 48% availability. He highlighted actions that would be required to improve performance during the next quarter, including scoping a new approach to on call recruitment involving moving towards monthly initial courses to provide more opportunities for new candidates. He also informed Members that the On Call Availability Reward Scheme (OCARs) has had a positive impact on on call availability.

A Member queried whether it would be possible for officers to include the duty system of appliances attending incidents within the daily incident summary that was sent out to officers and Members. The Head of Service Delivery confirmed that it was possible and that he would communicate this to the officers responsible for

sending out the information.

A Member queried what rewards were in place for wholetime firefighters and whether the cardiac response scheme would continue if the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) withdraws its support. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Service provided several wellbeing services and rewards schemes, including medical assistance for staff, mental health support and training and continual professional development (CPD) payments. He also informed Members that the Service wished to continue the cardiac response scheme and would work alongside the FBU to try to continue to operate the scheme within Cheshire.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the end of year review of performance for 2016-17 be noted.

5 END OF YEAR - INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT AND DIRECTOR OF AUDIT OPINION

Kevin Lloyd (the Auditor), a representative from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) was in attendance at the meeting to present the Internal Audit Progress Report (attached as Appendix 1) and Director of Audit Opinion (attached as Appendix 2) to Members.

He drew Members' attention to the Internal Audit Progress Report and highlighted work in progress which would be reported to the Committee following completion. It included work being undertaken concerning site specific risk information and the Service's partnership arrangements. He informed Members of the assurance definitions and risk classifications, as contained within Appendix A. He also referred Members to Appendix B to the report, which contained information on general performance indicators and an overview of output delivery.

The Auditor referred Members to the Director of Audit Opinion and Annual Report 2016-17. He informed Members that the overall opinion for the period covering 2016-17 was that significant assurance could be given. He highlighted the key commentary provided within the report which provided context to the significant assurance level received by the Authority. This included challenging issues in respect of financial sustainability, strategic monitoring of the Service's performance by the Authority, governance arrangements concerning the Blue Light Collaboration Programme and the potential undertaking of more formal assessments and inspections in the future following the Service's move from the Department for Communities and Local Government to the Home Office in early 2016.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the end of year Internal Audit Progress Report and Director of Audit Opinion and Annual Report 2016-17 be noted.

6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The forward work programme for 2017-18 was considered by Members. The

Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that the environment and sustainability annual update scheduled for September would be taken to the Estates and Property Committee initially and brought back to the Committee at a later date. The inclusion of an update for the Committee concerning work associated with the incident at Grenfell Tower was also agreed (to be presented at an appropriate time).

A Member queried whether the North West Fire Control Annual Performance Report would include call handling times alongside response times. The Chair advised Members to approach officers for this information and the Head of Operational Policy and Assurance agreed to provide further information on this for the Member that had requested the information.