



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday, 6 September 2017 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Headquarters,  
Cheshire at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D Bailey, M Biggin, A Dirir, P Harris, M Simon, T Sherlock and independent (non-elected) member A Ruddy

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A Record of Meeting**

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

**B Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Saunders.

**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 Performance and Overview Committee held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**E Minutes of the Closure of Accounts Committee**

**RESOLVED:** That

**[1] the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee acting as the Closure of Accounts Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**2 QUARTER 1 FINANCE REPORT 2017-18**

The Finance Manager introduced the report which provided a summary of the Service's financial performance and detailed progress against 2017/18 corporate projects. She informed Members that the 2017/18 revenue budget of £41.3m and capital programme of £1.765m were approved by the Authority in February.

The Finance Manager referred Members to details of the forecast outturn for each service area, contained within Appendix 1 of the report. She highlighted an overspend of £900k against the Service Delivery budget. This reflected the decision

made by the Authority to put a hold on the implementation of changes at Crewe and Ellesmere Port (second pump from wholetime to on-call) until a review had been undertaken, with reserves being utilised to fund the shortfall.

Additional reserves had also been allocated to Operational Policy and Assurance of £179k to fund the purchase of hose reels and connectors, approved for 2016/17 but delivered in 2017/18. Within Property Management £448k of additional reserves had been applied to fund approved projects delayed until the current financial year. A forecast overspend of £64k for People and Development had also been incorporated into the 2017/18 budget following the Authority approving a move to the Living Wage as the minimum pay threshold for all employees, including apprentices. Finally, there had been an additional call for £309k under Finance Resources. This was due to the Authority electing to make a lump sum payment to meet additional pension contribution requirements arising from the triennial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

The Accountant drew Members' attention to the Authority's capital programme, contained within Appendix 2 of the report. An updated version of Appendix 2 was circulated at the meeting containing amended figures for some of the individual projects and schemes within the capital programme. The Accountant informed Members that the capital programme was forecasting an overall outturn of £16.1m against an approved budget of £15.4m – a variance of £0.7m. He referred Members to progress against the Emergency Response Programme (ERP) and informed them that the overall programme was forecast to be £870k above the approved budget of £17.4m. This was a variance of 5% which was within the contingency agreed by Members. The remaining capital programme was progressing with underspends forecast on appliance and vehicle purchases. Members were also asked to note that the Chester Station project was currently on hold and that the new training facility at Sadler Road was at detailed design stage.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Quarter 1 Finance Report 2017-18 be noted.**

**3 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-18**

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the Service's performance against the key performance indicators (KPIs) for Quarter 1 2017-18. Appendix 1 to the report contained a corporate performance scorecard reflecting the Quarter 1 position against targets set and the year-on-year direction of travel for the Service's KPIs.

Members were referred to Appendix 2 of the report which contained a detailed description of each KPI, including a summary of current performance and any actions taken to improve performance. Further information was provided by officers on KPIs with a current progress status of green, amber or red. This included injuries in primary fires, deliberate primary and secondary fires, fires in non-domestic premises, fire safety orders completed, and on-call availability.

The Head of Service Delivery provided further details concerning the Service's

current performance for on-call availability, informing Members that on-call availability had averaged 66% across all pumps in Quarter 1. 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 70% availability and secondary on-call appliances achieving 47% availability.

Several changes had been undertaken to aid improving performance. The Head of Service Delivery highlighted the appointment of an additional on-call Station Manager as a support officer and the introduction of a pilot for a new wholetime on-call Watch Manager role for Knutsford and Holmes Chapel. He informed Members that the appointment of a Watch Manager to facilitate on-call recruitment and initial training courses had enabled the initial course and sessions for the written and practical tests to be scheduled monthly. This aimed to provide more regular opportunities for new candidates.

A Member queried how the cost for additional sessions to recruit on-call firefighters was being covered. The Head of Service Delivery informed Members that this cost was being met from the existing departmental budget. He explained that the role was covered within the existing contract of the Watch Manager and that the contract already allowed for additional hours to be worked to facilitate the new role. The Watch Manager could also recruit on-call staff to assist with the training as and when necessary, therefore only incurring a low cost for the additional sessions. He informed Members that costings for this would be brought back to Members at the next quarter.

A Member asked for clarification concerning cover at Wilmslow and how often other stations covered the Wilmslow area if the pump was unavailable. The Head of Service Delivery informed Members that Wilmslow was a key station within the Cheshire area; because of this, when the appliance was out of its area for more than 30 minutes another appliance would be sent in to cover. As Crewe and Ellesmere Port still had two wholetime appliances, the mobilising system currently utilised them more frequently to cover the Wilmslow area. He informed Members that availability at Wilmslow fire station was good and that this only occurred on a few occasions. He also informed Members that successful response times over the whole of Cheshire indicated that the current model for the distribution of cover across the region was working.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed Members that over the past year the Service had moved from 24 to 28 fire stations, distributing cover where it was needed. The model for Cheshire was therefore evolving and the second pumps at Crewe and Ellesmere Port were being utilised more often as a result of this.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Quarter 1 Performance Report 2017-18 be noted.**

#### **4 QUARTER 1 PROGRAMME REPORT 2017-18**

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided Members with an update on the Service's 2017-18 Integrated Risk Management Plan programmes and projects

throughout the first quarter.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which contained the health report for the first quarter of 2017-18. He informed Members of the progress made in respect of the Blue Light Collaboration Programme. The current progress status of the programme was amber due to delays to the expected completion dates in the Estates workstream. He referred Members to updates on Penketh and Lymm fire stations, highlighting areas where delays had occurred concerning the installation of optical fibre.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed Members that they would receive an update concerning the review of the duty system for the second fire engine at Crewe and Ellesmere Port at the Members' Planning Day scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017. He also informed them that the Fire Brigades Union would be attending the Members' Planning Day on 10<sup>th</sup> November to share their views.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Quarter 1 Programme Report 2017-18 be noted.**

## **5 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN - QUARTERLY PROGRESS AND FOLLOW UP REPORTS**

Michael Nulty (the Auditor), a representative from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) was in attendance at the meeting to present the 2017-18 Internal Audit Progress Report (attached as Appendix 1) and the consolidated Follow Up Report (attached as Appendix 2) to Members.

He drew Members' attention to the Internal Audit Progress Report. He highlighted that audit reviews concerning site-specific risk information and partnership arrangements had been completed since the last report to the Committee. Reviews were currently in progress concerning business audits, business continuity, equality and diversity recruitment, and national fraud initiative.

The Auditor concluded by referring Members to the Internal Audit Follow Up Report which provided assurance regarding management of agreed actions and was completed in August 2017.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Internal Audit Progress and Follow Up Reports be noted.**

## **6 ANNUAL EQUALITY MONITORING REPORT 2016-17**

The Director of Transformation introduced the report which provided a summary of key issues identified in the Service's Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016-17 which was attached as Appendix 1.

She highlighted that the Equality Monitoring Report was divided into two sections:

employment and community engagement. This ensured that equality monitoring was taking place both internally and externally. Statistics were included in the report for both sections providing a summary of identified trends over the course of 2016-17 and compared against the position reported in 2015-16.

She informed Members that work was already underway to try to ensure that any issues highlighted within the report were being addressed appropriately. Positive action campaigns were continuing from last year with taster days taking place throughout the year for under-represented groups.

A Member queried what the Service was doing to manage outside influences on the organisation, such as the newly implemented national increase to the retirement age for firefighters. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed the Committee that Members had approved funding for new gyms, equipment and the post for the internal fitness advisor in anticipation of an increase to the retirement age. All of these measures had been put in place to ensure that the fitness of each individual was maintained so that staff who were affected by this change were prepared physically.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2016-17 be noted.**

## **7 CHESHIRE CARDIAC RESPONSE PILOT EVALUATION REPORT**

The Head of Service Delivery introduced the report which provided an update on the Service's cardiac response pilot. He informed Members that, within the Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan, the Service had committed to rolling out the pilot to all stations this year. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had also given its support to the pilot throughout their involvement with the trial.

The Head of Service Delivery provided Members with a brief summary of the national context surrounding the pilot. The Service was currently awaiting the outcome from a pay claim between the FBU and employers over the pilot. The awaited outcome would determine whether or not the Service could continue the pilot, which had been extended to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 when a decision was hoped to be reached.

Group Manager Stewart Forshaw provided a detailed update for Members on Appendix 1 to the report which contained the evaluation report from the pilot. He informed Members that the pilot had taken place in Warrington, Crewe, Holmes Chapel and Frodsham. The data within the report covered the initial six months of the trial – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. He informed Members that the pilot had been successful overall and extended beyond the original end date of December 2016. Despite national issues and ongoing consultation over the pilot, he informed Members that feedback from the 2016-17 IRMP consultation indicated that 82% of staff supported the project.

A Member queried whether national issues concerning the pilot would mean that the Service would have to suspend the continuation of it. The Head of Service Delivery

informed Members that the local trade union recommendation was for firefighters not to participate in the Emergency Medical Response pilot if the current pay offer was not accepted by the FBU nationally. Concerns had been raised over whether the pilot was currently covered within the role map of a firefighter and what expectations of the role should be. If it did fall through nationally, he informed Members that the continuation of the trial would be a matter for local discussion.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Cheshire Cardiac Response Pilot Evaluation Report be noted.**

## **8 SPRINKLER UPDATE**

Station Manager Ian Kay introduced the report which provided an update on the work of the Service with regards to sprinklers. He informed Members that the Service had both an officers' group and a separate Members' sprinkler group.

He informed Members that the Service had been campaigning for the installation of sprinkler systems in high-rise residential premises for a number of years. Since the Grenfell Tower fire a number of housing providers had shown a renewed interest in the campaign. The Authority had previously committed £160k which had been offered to housing providers/duty holders to part-fund the retrofitting of sprinkler systems in high-rise blocks.

Members had also taken a notice of motion to each of the unitary authorities in the Service area, encouraging homeowners and businesses to install sprinkler systems. It called for officers to establish a policy on the installation of sprinklers in Council owned buildings and to work closely with the Service to ensure that where sprinklers could reduce risk, they were promoted. Each unitary authority adopted the motion either in full or in part.

Members discussed the item and welcomed the engagement of the unitary authorities with the Service.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Sprinkler Update report be noted.**

## **9 HIGH-RISE UPDATE**

Station Manager Mark Burrage introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the work that the Service had conducted in relation to high-rise accommodation since the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

He informed Members that Appendix A of the report contained a high-rise briefing detailing the work that staff had undertaken and provided information on the cladding for the 21 residential high-rise tower blocks in the Service area. A cross-departmental team had been established to coordinate the Service's response to the Grenfell Tower fire. Officers revisited each of the high-rise blocks to offer advice and

support residents. Fire safety audits were also completed on each of the high-rise blocks.

He highlighted that it was likely that the review of legislation that the Government had ordered following the Grenfell tragedy would look closely at the existing allocation of responsibilities between fire and rescue services and local authorities.

The Chair thanked Station Manager Mark Burrage for his dedication and ongoing work concerning high-rise accommodation in Cheshire.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the High-Rise Update report be noted.**

## **10 POWEY LANE AND CHESTER FIRE STATIONS - PRESENTATION**

The Head of Service Delivery presented an update on operational response/performance in Chester following the implementation of the new cover arrangements, which included moving the second appliance from Chester to Powey Lane fire station.

He informed Members that the Cheshire standard (a response time of 10 minutes or under to incidents) had been achieved on 100% of occasions following the move of the second appliance from Chester to Powey Lane fire station. He provided an overview of the changing nature of incidents within that area and highlighted the steady decline overall in the number of fires over the past decade. The relocation of Chester's second appliance to the new fire station at Powey Lane had enabled the Service to respond to road traffic collisions on the motorway more rapidly than before. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive reiterated the decline in the number of incidents attended annually and emphasised the importance of training to simulate incidents to ensure that skills were maintained.

A Member queried the criteria used to determine if there was a need for a second pump to attend alongside the first to an incident. The Head of Service Delivery informed Members that predetermined attendances were in place for different types of premises and risk and that these were reviewed as part of the Authority's annual risk management planning process. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive informed Members that a task analysis was also undertaken to determine the number of firefighters needed at each incident. When training, firefighters were encouraged to assess the available resources and turn out additional appliances if there was uncertainty surrounding the severity of an incident.

Members confirmed that they were satisfied with the current fire cover and response arrangements at Chester and Powey Lane.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Powey Lane and Chester Fire Stations presentation be noted.**

**11 DAYTIME ON CALL AVAILABILITY COVER - PRESENTATION**

Watch Manager Tam Blair (on behalf of one of the Watch Manager Development Programme teams) presented a proposal to Members focusing on improving day-time cover at on-call stations. He informed Members that there had been an increase of 21% in on-call establishment over the past five years.

The Service was working towards a target of 85%+ availability and he had proposals for helping the Service to achieve this target. His proposals included the creation of bespoke catchment areas and the introduction of a new pay banding. He used the example of Tarporley fire station, where the on-call pump was the primary pump, to illustrate how increasing the catchment area from 5 to 7 minutes would mean an additional 490 properties could be recruited from.

He informed Members that research had been undertaken surrounding the pay banding for on-call at other fire and rescue services. From this research, proposals had arisen concerning the potential to create a contract with core hour requirements and the potential to complete a 50-60 hour contract in 30-40 hours. This would be possible through each hour worked between Monday-Friday 0700-1900 counting as 1.3 hours.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive concluded the item by informing Members that engaging with employees was crucial to improving on-call availability and that this presentation exemplified that process.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the presentation on daytime on-call availability cover be noted.**

**12 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The forward work programme was considered by Members and no changes were made.