

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 22ND NOVEMBER 2017
REPORT OF: HEAD OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ASSURANCE
AUTHOR: SM STEPHEN WHITE

SUBJECT: NORTH WEST FIRE CONTROL – ANNUAL
REPORT 2016-17

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members about the performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC) during the year 2016-17 (1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017).

Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the performance information relating to North West Fire Control.

Background

2. This report is based on quarterly performance management reports produced by NWFC.

Information

System Performance

Availability

3. NWFC relies upon the call handling and mobilising system in order to provide an effective, efficient service. The contract for the system contains a requirement for the system to be available for 99.9% of the time, measured on an annual basis. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Availability	100%	100%	100%	100%

Faults

4. The contract for the system categorises faults by severity and includes target times to remedy the different fault categories. Category One faults are those that cause a total loss of availability of the system or a material deterioration of operational effectiveness (to such an extent that NWFC is unable to deliver all or part of its service). The target time to fix a Category

One fault is 6 hours. The definition of Category Two faults includes the terms 'material malfunction' and 'material deterioration in ... operational effectiveness'. Category Three faults involve minor impacts to the system and/or operational effectiveness.

5. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Category One	0	0	0	1
Category Two	9	12	11	9
Category Three	110	102	68	86

6. Overall, there continues to be a general downward trend in faults as the system has become increasingly stable and processes improved. Faults have been fixed in line with contractual requirements.

Speed

7. The system needs to operate quickly. The performance standard in the contract is complex. In essence the contract requires actions (referred to contractually as 'transactions') that are carried out by the system to be completed within a range of very short periods (e.g. less than one second to load the gazetteer address information on 95% of occasions).

8. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total no. of transactions	150,736	156,524	151,772	132,504
No. failed to meet standard	34 (0.02%)	23 (0.01%)	34 (0.02%)	35 (0.02%)
Average transaction speed	0.2 secs	0.2 secs	0.2 secs	0.2 secs

9. These figures are consistent with previous performance.

Call Handling and Mobilising Performance

Time to Answer Emergency Calls

10. A national target was recommended by CFOA and it against this target that NWFC has been reporting. The target is 95% of emergency calls should be answered in 10 seconds, or less.

11. Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds	95.59%	95.65%	95.65%	95.74%

Time of Call Answer to Time of Alerting the First Resources for all Emergency Calls

12. A national target was recommended by CFOA and it is against this target that NWFC reports. The target is for resources to be mobilised within 90 seconds of a call. Obviously, this only relates to calls where a mobilisation is necessary.

13. Performance is shown in the table below (average in seconds).

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Call to Alert in Seconds	113	114	116	107

14. As can be seen NWFC has been unable to meet the target (a difference of between 17 and 26 seconds). NWFC and the relevant fire and rescue services continue to work together with a view to achieving a reduction in the time taken to mobilise resources. However, there is a fine balance between speed and accuracy. NWFC follows protocols set by the fire and rescue services. Whilst the protocols impact on call handling times, they ensure that resources are only mobilised when necessary, ensuring their availability.

15. A number of actions are being pursued directly by NWFC. These include further enhancements to the way that the system presents information for particular types of incident and targeted activities to improve individual and team performance (learning from the best performers and analysis of data around certain incident types). NWFC is also working with the fire and rescue services to further analyse the data as it appears that the performance figures may not align entirely with the definition in the target.

Costs of Service

Percentage of Incidents by FRS 2016/2017

16. The cost of the service provided by NWFC is paid for in proportions agreed by the FRSs.

17. The table below shows the percentage of activities in each quarter per FRS area and then contains the overall percentage for the year compared to the

cost paid by each FRS. As previously, the figures show a very close alignment between activity and cost.

	Cheshire	Cumbria	Greater Manchester	Lancashire
Q1	17.19%	7.91%	50.54%	22.87%
Q2	17.11%	7.11%	51.06%	23.71%
Q3	17.19%	6.7%	51.58%	23.56%
Q4	18.09%	7%	50.72%	24.39%
Overall Average	16.9%	9.41%	47.86%	23.03%
Annual Percentage of Cost per FRS	18%	8%	48.5%	25.5%

N.B. The overall average figures do not add up to 100 as there is a small proportion of 'other' calls that are not accounted for in the table.

Staff Performance

18. Service staff regularly attend NWFC. Their observations form an important aspect of performance monitoring as they can take a view about aspects of the service provided by NWFC that are not measured statistically, e.g. the approach to call handling. There is close working for significant events and during certain periods, e.g. major disruption such as flooding and during the bonfire period. On the whole, the staff at NWFC continue to work well with the vast majority of calls leading to the correct mobilisation of resources. Systems and people are fully tested when conditions are the most challenging and staff at NWFC worked well on each occasion.
19. NWFC continues to take the training and improvement of the skills of its staff very seriously. This is evident from the management and integration of new starters and approach to the ongoing maintenance and improvement of skills.
20. Performance statistics are also considered by Team Leaders so that they can see how well their team members are performing and where additional help or training may be required. Individual performance also provides evidence for appraisals and is considered when performance related pay is determined.

Business Continuity

21. A full business continuity exercise has been carried out at NWFC. It was found that there was a good understanding of the principles of business continuity and an effective business continuity management system was found to be in place. Two successful exercises were carried out and fall back mobilising procedures have been tested. The savings anticipated in the original business case continue to be achieved.

Financial Implications

22. None resulting from the information in the report. The arrangement continues to deliver significant savings to the Authority. The Authority reduced its revenue budget in 2014-15 by £335k.

Legal Implications

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

Equality and Diversity Implications

24. None

Environmental Implications

25. None

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