

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 11TH JULY 2018
REPORT OF: HEAD OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND ASSURANCE
AUTHOR: STEPHEN WHITE

SUBJECT: NORTH WEST FIRE CONTROL – ANNUAL
REPORT 2017-18

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members about the performance of North West Fire Control (NWFC) during the year 2017-18 (1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018).

Recommended: That

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

Background

2. This report is based on the Quarterly Performance Management reports produced by NWFC.

Information

Mobilising 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. Availability for the year was 99.9% which is within the contractual requirement.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Availability	100%	99.98%*	100%	100%

*Due to a system outage in August 2017

Faults

- 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.
- Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Category One	1	1	0	0
Category Two	12	18	20	8
Category Three	92	77	75	87

- Compared to 2016-17 there is an increase in both Category One and Category Two faults with a decrease in Category Three faults. The fault target has not been met on all occasions, but this did not impact on the availability of the system (as evidenced in paragraph 3).

Speed

- 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).
- Performance is shown in the table below.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total no. of transactions	163,369	144,117	142,347	125,699
No. failed to meet standard	131 (0.08%)	119 (0.08%)	59 (0.04%)	17 (0.01%)
Average transaction speed	0.25 secs	0.27 secs	0.25 secs	0.25 secs

- These figures show a slight increase in average transaction speed compared to last year (+0.05 secs)

Call Handling and Mobilising Performance

Time to Answer Emergency Calls

10. A national target was recommended by CFOA and it is 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	95.74%	95.80%	95.75%	95.83%

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	112	115	110	105

14. As can be seen NWFC has been unable to meet the target (a difference of between 15 and 25 seconds which is a slight improvement compared to 2016-17). 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. The table above shows a measure of all 'attended' incidents with the following omissions:
 - Any incident classified as IRS or NWFC 'Other' – these are predominantly test and admin incidents some of which do not feed into the Fire Service Incident Recording Systems.
 - Chemical Suicide/Gassing Off
 - Concern for Welfare
 - Gaining Entry

- Calls to Assist Other Agencies Non-Life Risk (i.e. Police or Ambulance)
- Suspect Package/White Powder/Bomb
- Arson Threat
- Threatening to Jump (from height or into water)
- Attendance to be made to a non-critical incident within 2 hours

16. These incident types have been removed due to them not requiring an immediate attendance or where consultation with an officer such as a NILO determines the required attendance.

Costs of Service

Percentage of Incidents by FRS 2017/2018

17. The cost of the service provided by NWFC is paid for in proportions agreed by the FRSs.
18. 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	16.36%	6.96%	51.96%	23.60%
Q2	18.16%	7.21%	48.54%	25.03%
Q3	16.73%	7.70%	48.48%	26.11%
Q4	17.18%	7.71%	48.49%	25.46%
Overall Average	17.11%	7.40%	49.37%	25.05%
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

19. CFRS 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.

20. 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. NWFC now use the same Competence Management and eLearning system as CFRS, PDRPro.
21. 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

22. Two full business continuity exercises have been carried out at NWFC during the reporting period (Exercise Atlas in November 2017 and Exercise Hermes in March 2018). Both exercises took place whilst there was a complete shut down of the mobilising system, necessitated by a requirement to complete essential updates. Business Continuity arrangements are now fully embedded at NWFC with an effective management system in place.

Financial Implications

23. 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

24. 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

25. None.

Environmental Implications

26. None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE