



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday, 26 February 2020 at Lecture Theatre - Sadler Road, Cheshire at  
10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Phil Harris (Chair), Gina Lewis, James Nicholas, Jonathan Parry, Peter Wheeler, Norman Wright, Les Morgan, Rachel Bailey (substitute for Razia Daniels), Independent (non-elected) Member Derek Barnett

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A Record of Meeting**

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

**B Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Razia Daniels.

**C Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

**D Minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Performance and Overview Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**2 FINANCIAL REVIEW - QUARTER 3, 2019-20**

The Treasurer introduced the report which provided an overview of the Service's forecast of financial performance at the end of Quarter 3 and reported on the progress against 2019-20 capital projects.

He informed Members that, in relation to the revenue budget, the Quarter 3 review was reporting a forecast overspend of £80k. Further details were contained within Appendix 1 to the report.

He referred Members to Appendix 2 to the report which contained details of the movement in reserves. He also drew Members' attention to Appendix 3 to the report, which contained details of the schemes and projects within the capital programme. The capital programme was forecasting an overall outturn of £34.2m, £1.7m above the current programme mainly due to major build projects.

A Member asked for clarification on the Bellwin Scheme. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Operational Assurance and Service Improvement, informed Members that this was a Government Scheme set up to provide compensation for fire and rescue services in the event of them incurring expenditure during certain emergency response situations, such as flooding.

Another Member asked for an update on the additional costs reported regarding the Sadler Road project, which were higher than the approved 5% contingency. The Director of Governance and Commissioning reported that these were largely due to additional asbestos related costs requiring additional work to bring the building up to standard. He confirmed that an update would be taken to Members of the Estates and Property Committee.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the forecast outturn position in the Quarter 3 Finance report 2019-20 be noted; and**

**[2] the movement in reserves, as set out in Appendix 2, be approved.**

**3 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2019-20**

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance introduced the report, which provided Members with an update on the Service's performance against the key performance indicators (KPIs) for Quarter 3, 2019-20. The corporate performance scorecard reflecting the Quarter 3 position against targets set and the year-on-year direction of travel for the Service's KPIs was attached to the report.

Members were referred to the Performance Health report which was also attached to the main report. It contained a detailed description of each KPI, including a summary of current performance and any actions taken to improve performance.

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance expanded on the KPIs, providing further context particularly where targets had not been achieved:-

- Number of deaths in primary fires;
- Number of automatic fire alarms in non-domestic premises/false alarms;
- Fire safety audits in non-domestic premises;
- On-call availability.

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance referred Members to the KPI relating to the number of deaths in primary fires. Two deaths had occurred in Quarter 3 and the cause for both had been recorded as unknown until the Coroner's inquest had taken place.

The KPI status for the number of automatic fire alarms in non-domestic premises/false alarms was currently red (previously amber). The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance confirmed that figures were lower than in previous years due to the revised attendance policy which was approved in 2017/18. Unless

the policy was amended further, it was unlikely that additional reductions could be achieved.

An update was also provided regarding the fire safety audit KPI. Members were informed that the target had been revised and from Quarter 3 the number of audits achieved would be shown against the number that the Service had capacity to undertake.

The Head of Service Delivery provided an update on performance against the on-call availability KPI. On-call availability had risen to 66% in Quarter 3 (previously 62% at Quarter 2). He referred Members to the actions listed in the report which were required to improve performance.

Members welcomed the improvements being looked at and stated that it was important to consider how the Service worked collectively with other authorities and public bodies, in particular with parked cars and dangerous driving conditions due to icy roads. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive confirmed that officers were working with Cheshire Constabulary to target such issues. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Operational Assurance and Service Improvement, highlighted the proposal within the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-24 regarding the purchase of thirteen Rapid Response Rescue Units, which would enable a faster response to incidents using a smaller vehicle with 4 x 4 capability and which could be used in such driving conditions.

A Member referred to the 10 minute standard KPI and asked for further information on failure to achieve the standard. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance confirmed that he could provide further details outside of the meeting.

A Member asked for clarification on pre-alerting. The Head of Service Delivery explained that pre-alerting involved North West Fire Control alerting crews to an incoming call prior to completion of the call handling process to enable them to get to an incident earlier.

Another Member requested further information on the Unwanted Fire Signals Policy and what type of properties were exempt. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance stated that exempt premises tended to be life risk or sleeping premises, such as nursing homes. It was suggested that further input on AFAs could form part of a future Members' Planning Day.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 3, 2019-20 be noted.**

#### **4 PROGRAMME REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2019-20**

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided Members with an update on the Service's programmes and projects. He referred Members to Appendix 1 to the report which contained a health report for the Quarter 3, 2019-20 and picked out key performance areas for specific focus, including:-

- Whole Service Review;
- Blue Light Collaboration;
- Major build projects;
- The drone programme;
- Sprinkler campaign; and
- Implementation of the Fire Protection Review.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive formally thanked officers and Members for their assistance in shaping the Whole Service Review.

He also thanked officers and Members who had supported the Sprinkler Campaign.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Programme Report – Quarter 3, 2019-20 be noted.**

## **5 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2019-20**

Ann-Marie Harrop (the Auditor), a representative from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) was in attendance at the meeting to present the quarterly progress summary of the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan (attached as Appendix 1 to the report).

She provided Members with a brief overview of the progress made against the audit plan and informed them that reviews had taken place in the following areas: IT Service Continuity Review, Financial Systems and Efficiency Savings Review. It was reported that Substantial Assurance was found in the Financial Systems and Efficiency Savings Review, but Limited Assurance in the IT Service Continuity Review.

The Chief Information Security Officer was in attendance to provide a progress update against the areas of improvement identified within the IT Service Continuity Review. He explained that an action plan had been put in place. The two high risks identified had been rectified. Officers were aiming to address the two medium risks identified by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

Members were referred to Appendix 2 of the report which contained details of the work on the National Fraud Initiative which was also carried out in Quarter 3.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Internal Audit Report – Quarter 3, 2019-20 and National Fraud Initiative Report be noted.**

## **6 BONFIRE PERIOD REPORT 2019**

The Deliberate Fire Reduction and Road Safety Manager introduced the report which appended the Authority's Annual Bonfire Period Report 2019. It contained details of the preventative and operational activities of the Service and its partners during the bonfire period dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Overall, there had been a 22% reduction in deliberate small fires compared to 2018.

He drew Members' attention to unitary area performance during the 2019 bonfire period; all but one of the four unitary areas recorded a year on year decrease in deliberate small fires during this year's bonfire period. Warrington was the only unitary area to have seen an increase compared to 1 and 5 years ago respectively.

A Member asked for further information on the fuel removal waste management initiative referred to within the report. The Deliberate Fire Reduction and Road Safety Officer informed Members that bonfire removal schemes were in place, enabling the reporting of waste on public land. The schemes were effective in areas of high deliberate fire activity and the visual presence of teams actively removing material also discouraged the rebuilding of bonfires.

Another Member asked for further information on making cash contributions towards organised displays. The Deliberate Fire Reduction and Road Safety Officer informed Members that making cash contributions towards organised displays, particularly in areas of high deliberate fire activity, helped to reduce deliberate small fires and incidents. Members were encouraged to support this through Unitary Performance Group budgets.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the report be noted; and**

**[2] the recommendations in Section 12 of the Annual Bonfire Period Report 2019 (attached as Appendix 1) be supported.**

## **7 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE**

The Equality and Inclusion Officer introduced the report, which provided an overview of key equality, diversity and inclusion developments within the Service and progress made against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

The report outlined key areas of focus and accomplishments over the last 6 months, as well as priorities for the next 6 months.

He informed Members that the Service had been awarded third place in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2019 for the second consecutive year. The Service continued to be the top performing emergency service for the fifth consecutive year, the top performing employer in the North West region for the second year and Top Trans employer for the first year. The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive was awarded the 'Top Performing Leader' for the North West Region. Members congratulated the Service on these excellent achievements and to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive for his individual award.

He also highlighted that, following feedback from the last Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) inspection, a significant

amount of work had focused on improving fairness and promoting diversity in preparation for the 2020 inspection.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] progress to date be noted.**

## **8 GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PHASE 1 UPDATE**

The Station Manager, Protection, presented the report which provided Members with details of the Service's planning and position in relation to the recommendations from The Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 1 Report.

A Member raised concerns about the response to cross-border incidents involving high rise buildings with cladding and the risk to firefighters. The Station Manager reassured Members that the services in the region were working together to share information on incidents to ensure firefighter safety. Officers were trying to influence changes to legislation by responding to consultations. Cross-border exercises had also been arranged with neighbouring services.

Members stated that it would be helpful for this Committee to retain any consultation submissions that the Service sends to the Government and, where appropriate, provide a summary of actions.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the information contained within the paper be considered; and**

**[2] Members continue to support the work the Service is carrying out in relation to the recommendations within the report.**

## **9 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The table included those items that had been identified/agreed to-date. Members were asked to agree any additional items at the end of the meeting which needed to be added to the programme. No further items were requested.

Members asked for an update regarding Coronavirus and flooding and how the Service was dealing with these issues. Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Operational Assurance and Service Improvement, reassured Members that the Service had a business continuity process in place and Local Resilience Forum meetings were ongoing with partners to ensure wider plans were regularly updated and reviewed.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Forward Work Programme be noted.**