



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday, 22 July 2020 at Remote Meeting - Via Skype at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Councillors Phil Harris (Chair), Razia Daniels, Gina Lewis, Les Morgan, James Nicholas, Jonathan Parry, Peter Wheeler, Norman Wright, and 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

There were no apologies received.

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 held on 26th February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4 2019-20

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance introduced the report, which provided an update on the 2018-19 Quarter 4 review of performance for each of the Service's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Appendix 1 to the report included the Corporate Performance Scorecard which reflected the Quarter 4 position against targets set and the year-on-year direction of travel for the Service's KPIs.

Officers expanded on some of the KPIs, providing further context, particularly where targets had not been achieved, i.e.

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

The Head of Protection and Organisation Performance referred Members to the KPI

relating to the number of deaths in primary fires. Four deaths had occurred in Quarter 4, all individuals over 65 years of age.

The KPI status for the number of automatic fire alarms in non-domestic premises/false alarms was currently red. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance confirmed that the figure was still significantly lower than the historic average. The revised attendance policy was still leading to at least 50% fewer false alarms. He indicated that unless the policy was amended further, it was unlikely that further sustainable reductions could be achieved.

The KPI status for Platinum Address Success Rate, i.e. the top 10,000 households in Cheshire identified at most risk from fire, was currently Amber. The percentage was 61% which was lower than the 65% target. It was thought that this was due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic at the end of the quarter and the close down of the CFRMIS recording system while transferring data to SAFFIRE the new software solution.

Members were referred to the KPI for Fire Safety Audits in Non-Domestic Premises which was currently Amber. In Quarter 4 there was capacity to achieve 510 audits but the number carried out was 420. This was due to the final two weeks of March being directly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic with no audits taking place during most of this period.

The Head of Service Delivery provided an update of performance against the On-Call Availability KPI. On-call availability had been 74% in Quarter 4, and even though the Covid-19 pandemic had initially affected availability during the last two weeks in March an increase in home working had subsequently seen an increase. He referred Members to the actions listed in the report which were required to improve performance.

A Member referred to the Number of Automatic Fire Alarms in Non-Domestic Premises/False Alarms and asked if housing the homeless and rough sleepers in hotels could have resulted in a spike in AFAs. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance responded that there were no indications that this was a trend and most were single indicators and not repeat occurrences and protection teams were working with the owners/occupiers of premises to reduce the number of activations.

A Member referred to the number of drug related arson incidents recorded in Quarter 4 and asked how the Service was addressing this. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance explained that work with partners such as the police and local authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour and fire setting would continue in order to deliver improved performance in this area. Most of the incidents were deliberate fires involving vehicles, particularly mopeds, which could be linked to drug related activity.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 4, 2019-20 be noted.

3 PROGRAMME REPORT - QUARTER 4 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 final quarter of 2019-20 and picked out key performance areas for specific focus, i.e.

- Whole Service Review
- Blue Light Collaboration
- Replacement of Chester Fire Station

He said that the Whole Service Review was moving to the close down phase and new projects under the new IRMP would be added to future reports.

He provided an update on the Blue Light Collaboration Programme which was currently showing as Amber and this was due to the underlease not being completed and the end state collaboration agreement not being finalised.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive explained that the current Covid-19 pandemic had had an impact on the programme to create the new Chester Fire Station. Delays had been minimised by the contractor, but inevitably there had been issues with site workers and materials. The situation had now improved significantly in most respects, with only limited difficulties caused by the need for social distancing and some products remaining difficult to source in a timely fashion. He finished by mentioning and the positive feedback that had been received from staff about the project.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Programme Report – Quarter 4 2019-20 be noted.

4 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER 4 2019-20

Anne-Marie Harrop, a representative from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), was in attendance at the meeting to present the Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 4, 2019-20.

The Auditor referred Members to the Internal Audit Progress Report attached at Appendix 1.

She provided Members with a brief overview of the progress made against the audit plan and informed them that this report closed down the work for the remaining two pieces of work on the 19/20 plan in the following areas: Collaboration/Partnership considering the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) arrangements and the further assessment of activity contained in the HMICFRS Inspection Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Internal Audit Progress Report – Quarter 4 2019-20 be noted.

5 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION 2019-2020

Anne-Marie Harrop also dealt with this report.

The Auditor referred Members to the Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2019-20 attached at Appendix 1. She explained that the overall opinion for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 provides 'substantial assurance' in that there was a good system of internal control designed to meet the system objectives and controls are generally being applied consistently.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Internal Audit Annual Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2019-2020 be noted.

6 UNITARY PERFORMANCE GROUPS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Head of Service Delivery introduced the report, which provided an update on the initiatives supported and funded by the Unitary Performance Groups (UPGs) during 2019-20.

It was reported that the UPG meetings provided an opportunity for local Cheshire Fire Authority Members to engage with officers from Service Delivery, Prevention and Protection to scrutinise performance at a local level. The UPGs also developed initiatives which assisted with improving performance and outcomes for the communities within each unitary area. The UPGs have budgets allocated to enable them to consider and approve funding bids for activities within their areas. Information on some of the initiatives supported and funded by the UPGs during 2019-20 were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

A Member asked if the project with the Camerata was successful and a good investment. The Head of Service Delivery explained that the work with the Camerata had been ongoing for a number of years and engages with local school children across Cheshire on fire related subjects and dangers that may be encountered. It was felt to be a good investment towards educating younger members of the community.

A Member asked if the project on extension cables undertaken with Cheshire West and Chester could be extended across Cheshire and if there was an opportunity to look at ways of highlighting the dangers associated with chargers, the way chargers were being sold and as to whether they met an appropriate standard. The Head of Service Delivery explained that social media campaigns were regularly undertaken to highlight these dangers and the Service would continue with this work.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Unitary Performance Groups Annual report 2019-20 be noted.

7 TRAINING PERFORMANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Head of Operational Policy and Assurance introduced the report, which provided members with an update on the training arrangements and achievements throughout the training year 2019-20.

He drew Members attention to the Performance Dashboard and the items marked in red. He explained that it was important to note the investment being made in the new training facility and the fact that the trainers had moved around the County to continue their important work to maintain the quality of training of staff.

He explained that targets on Swift Water training had failed which because courses had been cancelled in the early part of the year as the stretches of water used were deemed too dangerous, with some areas closed. Courses had been re-scheduled for August 2020 in order for staff to update their skills and maintain competence in this area.

Targets had not been met on Watch Manager (WM) and Station Manager (SM) Command Training because facilities at Frodsham Fire Station were not as good as those used at Sadler Road and the usual numbers of staff could not be accommodated. Assessments were now continuing in order to ensure this core training is delivered.

He also explained that some on-site training, such as industrial premises and high rise, had been cancelled due to Covid-19, as premises could not be accessed. However, there was a plan in place to re-start these courses to maintain operational competence.

A Member drew attention to the number of acronyms used in the report and requested that in future these were explained in the report.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Training Performance Annual Report 2019-20 be noted.

8 HMICFRS INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance introduced the report which presented Members with an update in relation to the action plan produced in response to the 'Areas for Improvement' highlighted within the inspection report relating to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

He explained that completed actions were marked in grey. However, the Covid-19 pandemic had had an impact on delivery of some areas, but also helped to move others forward, e.g. delivery of the requirement for two way communication, i.e. Skype capability.

A Member requested a definition of supporting agile working for all staff and whether a report would be available at the next meeting on how this was being carried

forward and the way staff would be deployed in future. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance explained that this referred to giving staff the ability to do their normal day job while working away from office locations which included investing in technology and the ability to access packages and databases.

The Director of Governance and Commissioning explained that due to the Covid-19 pandemic offices could look differently in future with staff likely to be working in different ways.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

9 PROSECUTIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the prosecutions under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 during the 2019-20.

He informed Members that 26 cases had been taken to court over the past 11 years with significant fines and sentences given. He drew Members attention to Appendix 1 of the report, which included a brief description of the only prosecution pursued by the Service in 2019-20. There were also 9 ongoing cases which would be reported on in the 2020-21 year, as there had been a significant delay in court cases due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with some cases being adjourned or delayed.

A Member asked for further information on why there had been an increase in enforcement action concerned with businesses owned and operated by members of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance explained that this appeared to be a national trend and generally related to food or drink premises with living accommodation above, which were not designed to be used in this way. Protection teams were working closely with the Equality and Inclusion Officer to look at how the Service can raise awareness of these issues.

RESOLVED: That

[1] Members note the contents of the report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Louise Willis, from the Planning and Performance Department, Joint Corporate Service, introduced the report which provided Members with an update on the Risk Management Board Annual Report 2018-19, which was a retrospective report of the work undertaken and progressed up to the Risk Management Board meeting in March 2020. Significant progress had been made in reviewing risk management arrangements over the twelve month period, with the objective being to bring together and simplify risk management arrangements across fire and police and to improve the quality of risk information to enable management to have a better focus on risk.

RESOLVED:

[1] Members note the report.

11 PRE-ALERT TRIAL

Station Manager Huw Coates introduced the report which provided Members with a summary of the first four month period, 1st February 2020 to 31st May 2020, of the service-wide 'pre-alert' trial.

He explained that an initial, small-scale trial was introduced in April 2019 across six fire stations to prove the benefits of the concept and identify any unintended consequences of the system, with crews invited to provide feedback. This showed that on-call stations would benefit significantly from the system. As a result of the trial it was agreed to roll out the system throughout the County and during the first four months improvements in mobilising times were noted in comparison to the same period last year when pre-alerting was not in place.

A Member asked for clarification of the costs involved. Station Manager Coates explained that the initial configuration costs for the system were paid for by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. There was an ongoing annual cost of £18,000 which was split between the fire and rescue services which are served by North West Fire Control. The cost to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service in the year 2018-19 was £3,500.

RESOLVED:

[1] Members note the report.

12 SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Head of Prevention introduced the report which provided Members with reassurance about safeguarding procedures and outlined the number of safeguarding referrals made from 1st June 2019 to 31st May 2020.

RESOLVED:

[1] the report be noted.

[2] the future developments contained in paragraph 27 of the report be approved.

13 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The table included those items that had been identified/agreed to-date. No further items were added to the Programme.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] The Forward Work Programme be noted.