



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
held on Wednesday, 24 February 2021 at Remote Meeting - Via Skype at 10.00 am**

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

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 Wednesday 25th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 FINANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2020-21

The Head of Finance introduced the report which provided a review of the Service's forecast financial outturn and reported on the progress against 2020-21 capital projects at the end of Quarter 3.

She informed Members that, in relation to the revenue budget, the Quarter 3 review was reporting a forecast underspend of £238k, with a cumulative underspend for 2020-21 of £683k. Further details were contained within Appendix 1 to the report.

She referred Members to Appendix 2 to the report which contained details of the movement in reserves. She 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 £40,290m, £1.566m above the current programme.

A Member asked if the cumulative underspend would be reflected in calculations for next year's precept and the Head of Finance confirmed that any permanent underspending would be taken into account.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the forecast outturn position be noted; and

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

3 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2020-21

The Group Manager 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, 2020-21. 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.

The continuing Covid-19 pandemic had meant that many normal activities had been impacted. Some activities were continuing, but at a lower level than normal, but some activities remained paused, e.g. thematic inspections, fire safety audits and the risk based inspection programme.

The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance referred Members to the KPI relating to the number of deaths in primary fires. Two fatalities had occurred in Quarter 3 in one incident with the cause believed to involve smoking materials. Both victims were over 65.

The KPI status for the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs) was currently amber. The Head of Protection and Organisational Performance confirmed that at the end of quarter three there were 273 ADFs compared to a target of 272. There had been a small increase in the number of kitchen fires from 134 to 137 and a small increase in the number of fires started in the bedroom and living room. There had also been an increase in the number of fires involving single occupancy households from 82 to 107 and further analysis of these figures would take place.

The Head of Service Delivery provided an update on performance against the on-call availability KPI. On-call availability had been maintained at 68% in Quarter 3. However, this was still below target. He referred Members to the actions listed in the report which were intended to improve performance.

Members were referred to the KPI for Working Days Lost to Injury which was currently red. This was due to 56 days lost in quarter one as a result of injuries sustained in three separate accidents, two of which occurred late in the final quarter of the previous year. In Quarter 3 there were 37 duty days lost due to one accident to an On-call Firefighter.

A Member asked if there was any further information available on RTCs involving cyclists or pedestrians, particularly where they may have occurred at night due to low visibility. The Group Manager Organisational Performance said that additional context could be included for future meetings.

A Member asked what measures were in place to protect empty premises that had closed during the pandemic. The Group Manager Organisation Performance said that the Business Safety Team were using social media to engage with the community as much as possible with advice and information.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

4 PROGRAMME REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2020-21

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, 2020-21 and picked out key areas for specific focus

He informed Members that the Training Centre was now open and being used by recruits. An official opening ceremony would be arranged in due course. This project would now be moved to closedown phase. Chester Fire Station had now been completed and handed over and thanks were extended to the Director of Governance and Commissioning for leading on the project and to the staff for their patience.

A status had not been added to the Crewe Fire Station project update at the moment. However, a suitable delivery plan would be in place shortly with milestone dates added to the Cheshire Planning System. The Chief Fire Officer referred Members to the Wilmslow Fire Station project which was now gathering pace. More detail would be available as this progressed.

The Cheshire Fire Drones project was currently Amber awaiting a fundamental review into the project which would take place in May 2021 with a further update available in July. The Purchase of a High Reach Fire Engine was also Amber which had been delayed due to the third Covid-19 lockdown which prevented proposed visits to view vehicles.

A Member asked if further work could be done with the developer of the new housing estate which would be in the vicinity to the Training Centre, following some negative feedback received from residents regarding smoke. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this would be progressed.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

5 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - QUARTER 3, 2020-21

Anne-Marie Harrop (the Auditor), a representative from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) was in attendance at the meeting to present the quarterly summary of the 2020-21 Internal Audit Progress Report (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: Pensions, Financial Systems and Risk Management. It was reported that High Assurance in Financial Systems and Risk Management was found and Substantial Assurance in Pensions.

It was noted that there had been one change to the plan, the work to consider Estates was to be deferred to the 2021-22 audit plan in light of Covid-19 and the anticipated impact of the HMICFRS inspection.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

6 HMICFRS COVID-19 STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

The Group Manager Performance gave an update on the results from the Covid-19 survey undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

A total of 214 staff provided a response, equating to a response rate of 25%. Nearly 60% of responses were provided by firefighters while 31% were provided by fire staff.

The feedback provided was very positive overall, reinforcing the positive results from the Service's own Covid-19 staff survey undertaken in June/July 2020.

RESOLVED: That

[1] That the report be noted and the recommendations supported.

7 BONFIRE PERIOD REPORT 2020

The Deliberate Fire Reduction and Road Safety Manager introduced the report which appended the Authority's annual Bonfire Period Report 2020. It contained details of the preventative and operational activities of the Service and its partners during the bonfire period 24th October 2020 to 7th November 2020.

Overall, there had been a 38% reduction in deliberate small fires compared to 2019 and a 90% reduction on 5 years ago.

He drew Members' attention to unitary area performance during the 2020 bonfire period; all but one of the four unitary areas recorded either no change or a year on year decrease in deliberate small fires. Halton was the only unitary area to have seen an increase compared to last year, however, all unitary areas had seen a reduction from 5 years ago, respectively.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted; and

[2] the recommendations in Section 11 of the annual Bonfire Period Report 2020 (attached as Appendix 1) be supported.

8 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION 6 MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT 2020-21

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 following the deferral of the 2020 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index submission, the Service had now received information relating to the 2021 submission. New criteria included intersectionality, bi-sexuality, pansexuality and gender identity. To assist with the understanding of the new criteria, the Equality and Inclusion Officer has been working closely with the Service's designated Stonewall Account Manager to discuss the work currently in progress and to prepare the submission evidence.

The Equality and Inclusion Officer also highlighted the continuing work of the Positive Action Group and On-call Recruitment Team in encouraging applications from under-represented groups. This work included reviewing and identifying new platforms to promote careers such as working with existing partners to look at advertising vacancies on their social media platforms and websites to help target a specific audience.

The Equality and Inclusion Officer also indicated that the revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-24 would be submitted to the Fire Authority later this year.

RESOLVED: That

[1] progress to-date be noted.

9 GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PHASE 1 & 2 UPDATE

The Station Manager, Protection, presented the report which provided Members with details of the Service's response in relation to the recommendations arising from The Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 1 Report and to provide an update on Phase 2 of the Inquiry.

He informed Members that Phase 2 of the Inquiry started at the end of January 2020, but has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, remote hearings had resumed in February 2021.

A Member asked for further information on the finances required to address some of the findings of the Inquiry and how the Service would engage in lobbying for change. The Chief Fire Officer said that this would be subject to wider discussion at a future Members Planning Day.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report and actions carried out to date be noted.

10 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The forward work programme was considered by Members. The Director of Governance and Commissioning said that in order to balance the agenda for future meetings, some items would be moved from the July meeting to September 2021.

RESOLVED: That:

[1] The Forward Work Programme be noted.