



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE  
held on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at Lecture Theatre - Training Centre, Sadler  
Road, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 2FQ at 10.00 am.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Phil Harris (Chair), Rachel Bailey Razia Daniels, Gina Lewis, James Nicholas, Peter Wheeler, Norman Wright and independent (non-elected) member Derek Barnett.

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A Recording of Meeting**

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

**B Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phil Easty (Councillor Rachel Bailey attended as a Substitute Member) and Councillor Jonathan 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 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**2 FINANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2 2021-22**

The Treasurer introduced the report, which provided Members with a review of the Service's forecast financial outturn and reported on progress against 2021-22 capital projects.

The Treasurer drew Members attention to the underspend of £726k in Quarter 2. This had offset the overspend from Quarter 1 with a cumulative underspend of £17k.

He summarised elements of the report and referred Members to Appendix 2, the Movement in Reserves 2021-22.

A Member questioned if the final figure was known for the Manchester Arena Public Inquiry. The Director of Governance and Commissioning advised that as the Authority's share of the costs to-date was £150k and with the inquiry in its closing stages he believed that the Authority's share of the final costs should not exceed £50k.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the forecast outturn position – Quarter 2 2021-22 be noted; and**
- [2] the movement in reserves as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.**

**3 PROGRAMME REPORT - QUARTER 2, 2021-22**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided Members with an update on the Service's programmes and projects (including those contained within the Authority's annual IRMP action plan). He highlighted the following:

- Crewe Fire Station: planning permission for the replacement fire station was expected to be granted imminently, with contractors due to be appointed in January and a projected start on site in March 2022.
- The modernisation programme consultation with staff was complete at Congleton, Ellesmere Port, Knutsford, and Malpas Fire Stations. The cost for the work required was now being compiled.
- Preparatory work relating to the purchase of houses in Wilmslow to facilitate the transition to day-crewing was ongoing. This was dependent upon the Fire Authority's decision in respect of the Annual Plan for 2022-23.
- A long-term plan for the drone project was being produced. The plan would consider if the Service required its own drone capacity, or if arrangements with partners should be formalised.
- The Rapid Response Rescue Units (RRRU) were due for delivery by the end of the year for roll out to the On-Call stations early in 2022. Watches were being trained in the National Operational Guidance for the Rapid Response Vehicles utilising the motorway at the Training Centre.
- Work was ongoing on the Flood and Water Response Provision. A report would be prepared for the Fire Authority meeting in February.
- The Wildfire All-Terrain Vehicle had been delivered and was going live in December 2021.
- The Road Safety Strategy Plan for Cheshire was on amber status due to delays with partners. The Service will continue to work with partners to

progress this project.

A Member gave thanks for delivering the RRRU project, especially with the known supply chain issues during Covid.

A Member questioned if the procurement of the Flood and Water Response Provision equipment could be brought forward. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that some of the equipment had been on trial with certain stations. An updated timeline for implementation would be circulated to Members.

A Member acknowledged that whilst it was not the sole responsibility of the Service to deliver the Road Safety Strategy Plan for Cheshire, it would be worth the Fire Authority writing to the Leaders of the Cheshire Councils as well as other key partners in the hope that this would create some impetus.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 2 2021-22 be noted and approved.**

**RECOMMENDED: That**

**[2] the Fire Authority write to the Cheshire Councils and other key partners with a view to securing progress with the Road Safety Strategy Plan for Cheshire.**

#### **4 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2, 2021-22**

The Group Manager, Organisational Performance introduced the report, which provided an update on the Service's Quarter 2, 2021-22 performance for each of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The report included the Corporate Scorecard, which reflected the Quarter 2 position against targets set and the year-on-year direction of travel for the KPIs.

The Organisational Performance Manager explained that all of the activities paused during the Covid-19 pandemic had now been restarted and the targets had been reinstated, with the exception of the operational crews delivering the Safe and Well visits; they were only restarted in Quarter 3 and were therefore not referenced in the report.

- The Number of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) in Non-Domestic Premises was amber due to missing the target by one attendance. Additional support measures had been introduced to reduce the number of AFAs.
- The Number of Safe and Well Visits (SAW) Delivered to Properties of Heightened Risk had red status. A number of challenges were impacting the figures, e.g. vacancies within the Prevention team and Covid restrictions preventing the training of new members of staff. A national shortage of smoke alarms had also had an impact. The issues impacting

SAW visits had been acted on and visits were prioritised to the most vulnerable in the community.

- The target for the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) was missed by 6 audits. The audits missed had been scheduled for the beginning of Quarter 3.
- The On-call Availability had decreased from 64% in Quarter 1 to 58% in Quarter 2. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that Quarter 2 coincided with the summer holiday period and the easing of lockdown restrictions. He advised that four On-Call stations were performing above target, four stations were close to target and four stations were performing below target. The four underperforming stations have had individual actions taken to improve availability. These include prioritising training programmes to get firefighters through their development programmes and providing latent resource to increase availability.
- The figures for Average Days/Shifts Lost to Sickness were above target. Actions had been put in place to reduce the figures with monthly scrutiny at Attendance Management Board and HR support.

A Member questioned who was responsible for Automatic False Alarms in Non Domestic Premises. The Head of Prevention and Protection outlined that it was the responsibility of the premises, their engineers would be expected to review the fault and ensure the alarm system was correctly maintained. Faults were recorded as a false alarm when no identifiable cause could be found. Officers work with hospitals to follow up on any false alarms and put mitigating measures in place to reduce false alarms.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Performance Report – Quarter 2 2021-22 be noted.**

## **5 HMICFRS INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

The Group Manager, Organisational Performance introduced the report, which provided Members with an update on the HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan. The final outstanding actions in the Action Plan were completed by the end of October 2021. As a result, the Action Plan had been closed.

It was understood that HMICFRS would publish its Inspection Report, relating to the second inspection, in December 2021. Officers anticipate the production of an Action Plan during Quarter 4 of 2021/22, which would be presented to Members and reported on as progress was made against any Areas for Improvement.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan Report be noted.**

## **6 INTERNAL AUDIT QUARTER 2 PROGRESS REPORT**

Anne-Marie Harrop (the Auditor), a representative from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) was in attendance to present the Internal Audit Quarter 2 Progress Report.

She provided Members with a brief overview of the progress made on the Blue Light Collaboration review, given Limited Assurance and the National Fraud Initiative Data Matches.

A number of audit reviews were in progress, Health and Wellbeing, Financial Systems and Cyber Organisational Control.

The audit plan was on track and no concerns were brought to the Members attention.

### **RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Internal Audit Quarter 2, Progress Report be noted.**

## **7 ANNUAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING REPORT 2020 - 21**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager introduced the report, which provided an update on the management of health, safety and wellbeing in the Service. He highlighted to Members the key achievements of the Service during 2020-21.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, all of the Service's risk assessments for activities were reviewed and used to manage risk. Specific measures were put in place due to Covid-19 e.g. issuing firefighters with individual Breathing Apparatus (BA) facemasks, reducing the risk of infection. Training practices were revised, buildings made Covid secure, social distancing and enhanced hygiene procedures were implemented throughout the organisation. Six audits were carried out by the HSE on individual fire stations, none resulted in any action being taken.

Five incidents were reported to the Health and Safety Executive, three were injuries to staff and two were because of breathing apparatus incidents. An overall decrease in injury accidents occurred during the year and all accidents were investigated with a view to implementing preventative actions.

During 2020-21 there were seven reports of violence and aggression towards staff, this was a slight reduction on the previous year.

A Member questioned when aggression towards staff was reported to the Police. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager advised that any physical attack and groups throwing stones for example would be reported. Fire engines carry CCTV which could be used in such an event to identify perpetrators, but individuals did not carry cameras and the likelihood of securing a prosecution was low. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that every incident was taken very seriously and followed up to the fullest extent. Shared intelligence was reducing incidents and a review of

youth programmes was taking place currently.

A Member asked about the circumstances relating to the two failures of BA sets. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager advised that one or two could fail per year. Sets were sent to the HSE to be examined to determine the cause, which could be dirt in the valve causing a free-flow. Both the incidents happened when the firefighters were carrying out their pre-entry checks.

A Member enquired if a fire engine was involved in an accident whilst on blue lights if it would stop. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager advised that it would depend on the incident. For minor accidents the fire engine would carry on and return later. Each fire engine carries 'Bump Cards' allowing the officer to fill in the details and leave with the damaged vehicle.

A Member queried if suspending the random drug and alcohol testing during Covid had caused any issues. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that whilst the testing was a useful tool, problems with alcohol and drugs were usually evident to the individual's colleagues.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report 2020-21 be noted.**

## **8 ANNUAL ROAD SAFETY REPORT 2020-21**

The Road Safety Officer introduced the report which provided an update on the targeted road safety activities 2020-21. Activities were delivered in support of the multi-agency road safety plans of the local authorities and Cheshire Police and were designed to reduce road traffic collisions, deaths and injuries. He highlighted the achievements of the Service at events throughout the year.

During 2020 a total of 174 Road Traffic Collision's required the attendance of the Service. 48.3% of these incidents required the Service to perform an extrication of a casualty at the scene.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on direct engagement and was replaced with virtual delivery and social media messaging. All of the Service's interventions were restarted in September 2021.

The Service supported the TyreSafe Winter Driving campaign now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. More incidents were caused by defective tyres than caused by mobile phone usage and continues to be a key target area.

It was recognised nationally by the National Police Chiefs Council that during the pandemic, there was an increase in speed-related accidents occurring on the roads (due primarily to roads being less populated). The No Need To Speed campaign ran virtually on social media.

During the pandemic the Firebikes had assisted the Blood Bike service in the delivery of blood, breast milk and samples to support the NHS. They also supported the Police in their operation Slow Down Saves Lives.

Cheshire Road Safety Group had received £25,000 of funding to support the Share the Road campaign, to gain greater reach across Cheshire. Details of the work carried out by the Cheshire Road Safety Group would be presented to Members in 2022.

A Member asked for an update on e-scooters. The Road Safety Officer replied that Chester was part of the national trial for the hiring of e-scooters. A user was required to have a valid driving licence and an account to hire one. There had been issues with e-scooters and enforcement was the responsibility of the Police.

A Member asked if the Road Traffic Incidents data could be broken down by area the next time it was reported.

A Member commented that there were older motorbike riders in organised groups and asked about engagement with these groups. The Road Safety Officer replied that the Service promotes Biker Down to these groups, and the Service motorbikes go to known meeting areas to engage directly with riders. However, enforcement would be the responsibility of the Police.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Annual Road Safety Report 2020-21 be noted.**

## **9 INTERIM BONFIRE REPORT**

The Group Manager, Prevention provided Members with an interim update on the preventative and operational activities of the Service during the bonfire period (24<sup>th</sup> October to 7<sup>th</sup> November). He confirmed that a full report would be presented at the next meeting.

Across the bonfire reporting period, 55 deliberate secondary fires were recorded, which was a 47.6% reduction from 5 years ago. 10 Stations experienced Deliberate Secondary Fires with 18 occurring in Warrington, which was an increase of 13 from the previous year.

The Service actively promoted safety messages about bonfire safety across Cheshire. No attacks on staff were reported during the bonfire period.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the interim bonfire report be noted.**

## 10 MENTAL HEALTH - 6 MONTH UPDATE REPORT 2021

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisor introduced the report, which provided a 6 Month Update on the initiatives carried out in 2021. He drew Members attention to the highlights.

The Mental Health Steering Group (MHSG) developed the Service's first Mental Health Strategy, and a subsequent Action Plan had been produced and was signed off on the 2 June 2021.

The number of TRiM practitioners now stands at 60 across the Service. Further training courses would take place during 2022 with the ultimate aspiration to have a qualified TRiM practitioner on each Station and Watch.

The Service had 16 Mental Health First Aiders and intended to grow this network during 2022.

A range of activities were held for World Mental Health Day, including yoga, nature walks, mindfulness sessions, a board game that promoted discussion on mental health and guest speakers from the State of Mind Sports Charity.

Over the next six months, new networks were being set up to develop a Fathers group and a Carers network. Work was underway to have a parity of esteem between mental health and physical health. The Mental Health Advisor would join the Fitness Advisor to make joint visits, starting in the new year. Whilst attending their fitness test, staff would be given the option to have a mental health MOT.

A Member asked how the lockdowns had affected people and if Cheshire had seen an increase in suicides. The Mental Health Advisor commented that there was an expectation of an increase in suicides due to lockdown, but thankfully this did not happen. An average of 3 to 4 suicides a month take place within Cheshire and a slight increase in numbers has been seen since restrictions have eased, thought to be due to people having more time on their own and being unsupervised. There were very good charities locally, Papyrus in Warrington a suicide prevention charity and Amparo who support people who have been affected by suicide. The Service is working to introduce suicide first aid to staff to give people the confidence to speak to colleagues about suicide.

A Member requested more help for those struggling with menopause and mental health and raising awareness on these issues.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Mental Health - 6 Month Update Report 2021 be noted.**

**11 THE PREVENTION DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP REPORT 2020-2021**

The Partnerships Coordinator presented an overview of the Prevention Department's Partnerships Report 2020-21. A Partnership Scrutiny Board meets every quarter to monitor the performance and improve the governance of partnership roles.

In total 159 Home Safety Assessments (HSAs) were completed during the year. In addition, 93 smoke alarms and 8 fireproof letterboxes were fitted.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Safe and Well (SAW) visits were amended in line with Covid restrictions and significant developments in relation to partnership activity continued in order to improve and expand the SAW delivery going forward.

Dr Julian Clarke, from Edge Hill University, evaluated the affordable warmth element of SAW and concluded that the affordable warmth screening had made significant savings to householders on their fuel bills, reducing the likelihood of householders using unsafe fire practices to heat their homes.

Dr Julian Clarke researched the Service's work on reducing atrial fibrillation. 200 residents were signposted to primary care for further investigation following a SAW visit. It was estimated that the atrial fibrillation screening had helped avert between 3 and 18 strokes and save between four and twenty-six million pounds.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training had been delivered to Station Managers, Lead Advocates and staff from Service Delivery. This reiterated how elements within SAW visits could improve resident's quality of life and instigate preventative health measures on behalf of health and wellbeing partners.

Dr Julian Clarke had been commissioned to produce an evaluation of the Service's response during the Covid-19 pandemic; this work is ongoing.

A Member questioned what was involved in the atrial fibrillation screening. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer replied that it looked at irregular heartbeats, it was simple to detect and if left untreated it would likely end in a stroke.

A Member asked what the Service was doing to support people over the winter period. The Partnerships Coordinator responded that the advocate teams had received 'affordable warmth' training and were in contact with the local authorities regarding fuel poverty.

**RESOLVED: THAT**

**[1] the Prevention Department's Annual Partnership Report 2020-2021 be noted.**

**12 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The forward work programme was considered by Members and no changes or additions were made.

**RESOLVED: That**

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