



**MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 18 November 2015 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00am.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D Mahon, J Mercer (Chair), L Morgan, M Simon and N Wright.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Tony Cobain and Kevin Lloyd, representatives from Mersey Internal Audit Agency

**PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC**

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A RECORDING OF MEETING**

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

**B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors D Bailey, P Harris and Independent Member: Mr M McBride.

**C DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of Members' interests.

**D MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That

**the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee held on Wednesday 19 August 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**E MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That

**the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee held on Wednesday 19 August 2015 be received, for information.**

**F MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That

**the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee held on Thursday 8 October 2015 be received, for information.**

## **ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION**

### **2 QUARTER 2 – FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2015-16**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications introduced this report which presented the Quarter 2 position of organisational (Authority) performance against Service plans, Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) programmes and projects and budget.

The Head of Finance drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 to the report which showed the estimated revenue outturn compared to the Authority's budget, which he explained had been revised after the Quarter 1 report had been presented at the last meeting of this Committee. The Head of Finance advised Members that the Service's Heads of Department had commenced work on their departmental budgets for 2016-17 and were considering where savings could be identified the result of which showed some early savings reflected as underspends in existing budgets for 2015-16.

The Head of Finance highlighted the key variances which included the estimated overspend of £125k on Service Delivery. He explained that this was due to the cost of the Bosley incident, offset by underspending on on-call pay budgets.

The Protection budget continued to underspend due largely to vacant posts. The Prevention underspend was due to early savings against the Organisational Review target offset by some overspending against the Prince's Trust budget.

The estimated overspend on Operational Policy and Assurance was largely as a result of reserving funds to meet the cost of introducing the new National Operational Guidance. The underspend on Fleet Services was due largely to reduced fuel costs.

The underspend in Property Management reflected that budgets for new stations were introduced in the 2015-16 budget but were unlikely to be need until 2016-17. Members were advised that £116k would now be spent on planned maintenance brought forward from 2016-17. The underspend in ICT was as a result of early savings against the Organisational Review, additional income and the in-sourcing of software development.

With regard to Public Service Transformation the Head of Finance explained that this cost was originally planned to be met from reserves but, given the overall position on the Authority's budget, the use of reserves would not now be required.

Finally the continued underspend on wage inflation reflected the need to maintain the salary budget at a level which would meet the additional burden of changes to Employer's National Insurance contributions in 2016-17.

The Head of Finance summarised by confirming that it was estimated that in total the Authority would underspend by a further £317k this quarter. He explained that this was in addition to the underspend of £500k reported to the last meeting of the Committee and confirmed that, at the next meeting of Fire Authority, in December, officers would be recommending that any underspend be transferred to the IRMP or capital reserve.

The Head of Finance referred Members to the Authority's capital programme detailed in Appendix 2 to the report. He explained that the capital element of the Emergency Response Programme which included the building of four new stations and a safety centre was now well underway. He confirmed that the station at Alsager was now complete with an estimated overspend of £80k. Work had already commenced on site at Penketh and would commence on the Powey Lane site in the new year. Finally he explained that a report would be submitted to Members of the Policy Committee in December seeking approval to proceed with a contract for the fire station and safety centre at Lymm, which would include the overall financial position on the Emergency Response Programme.

The Head of Finance highlighted the significant savings in relation to the appliance replacement programme. This had been achieved by completion of an exercise which reviewed the specification of the appliances and the hydraulic platforms by the Service's Fleet Manager, prior to purchasing. He confirmed that the appliances approved as part of the 2014-15 programme had now been delivered with the hydraulic platforms due for delivery in late spring 2016.

The Head of Finance concluded by drawing Members' attention to the table within the report which provided a detailed breakdown of the Authority's debtor position. He confirmed that, in general, the Authority did not have significant problems recovering debt.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications continued by presenting those sections of the report that related to the Service's performance which included a summary of the Quarter 2 position on headline IRMP12 programmes and projects. The report also included a summary from each Head of Department which reflected Quarter 2 progress against their 15-16 Service plans (attached as Appendix 3).

He highlighted the progress on a number of corporate programmes detailed within the report which included the organisational review; the groundwork had been done but its progress depended upon the outcome of the Blue Light Collaboration Programme; and the sprinkler campaign which continued to be challenging with Halton Housing Trust and Wulvern Housing both confirming that they would not be installing sprinklers. Officers would be re-considering the best way to progress with the campaign.

In conclusion, the Head of Planning, Performance and Communications provided an overview of the Corporate Performance Scorecard attached as Appendix 4 to the report which he explained was supplemented with the commentary within the report. He confirmed that the information reflected the quarter 2 position against targets set at the start of the year for the organisation's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). He drew Members attention to a number of indicators which included the injuries in primary fires, which he

confirmed had been revised to 22, and the number of deliberate fires both of which were over target, with slight year on year increases recorded against extremely challenging targets. He explained that the increase in the number of deliberate fires was mainly due to unprecedented low numbers of incidents last year. Finally, he referred to the average days/shifts lost to sickness target where the actual figures for Q2 were 1.71 days/shifts lost against a target of 2.75 days/shifts lost. This remained very positive at mid year, with the figure being the lowest achieved by the Service, despite a range of significant changes which had had an impact on staff across all areas of the organisation.

The Chair congratulated the Service on the performance achieved for average days/shifts lost to sickness which she agreed was extremely positive.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Quarter 2 Financial and Performance Review 2015-16 be noted.**

### **3 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN – QUARTER 2 PROGRESS / FOLLOW UP POSITION**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications introduced Tony Cobain and Kevin Lloyd, the Authority's appointed Internal Auditors from Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), who were in attendance at the meeting and would be presenting this report to the Committee.

The Auditor explained that this report provided Members with a quarterly progress summary against the 2015-16 Internal Audit Plan and also information in relation to 'follow up' activities.

He explained that the 'follow up' Audit 2014-15 and the National Fraud Initiative (which was a data matching exercise) had taken place since the last report to the Committee in August. He highlighted the work in progress detailed within the report and confirmed that there had been one amendment to the Audit Plan for 2015-16 which had been approved by senior officers. He explained that the scheduled review of Risk Maturity was being replaced with support and advice being provided by MIAA on the Blue Light Collaboration Programme.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications advised Members that the Unitary Performance Group audit report had been drafted by MIAA and would be shared with Members at the Planning Day in January and subsequently reported to the Policy Committee at its January meeting.

The Auditor drew Members attention to Appendix 2 to the report which provided Members with assurance that actions and recommendations from previous audits have been progressed or completed by officers. He summarised the latest position of the 47 actions scheduled for implementation which were detailed within the report.

A Member queried the reason for a number of the actions from the Vehicle Fleet report having been progressed but not implemented. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this information could be sought and provided to Members.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the Internal Audit Plan Quarter 2 Progress Report and Follow Up Position report be noted.**

**4 ANNUAL ROAD SAFETY REPORT 2014/15**

The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager introduced this report which summarised the Service's 2014/15 targeted road safety activities. He explained that these activities had been delivered in support of the multi-agency road safety plans of the local authorities and Cheshire Constabulary and were designed to reduce road traffic collisions, deaths and injuries.

He referred Members to the financial implications within the report which detailed the income the Service received for delivering commissioned road safety education to Key Stage (KS) 2 and KS4 students in Cheshire East. He confirmed that this agreement with Cheshire East Council had been extended until 2018.

The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager drew Members attention to the Appendix to the report which provided details of the road safety interventions delivered by the Service. He summarised each of the events and the targets achieved by the Service and its partners. He assured Members that he continued to focus on the quality of delivery of the events by way of external and internal evaluation, to ensure the events continued to improve and engage effectively with the targeted audience.

The Road Safety Member Champion confirmed she had been extremely impressed by the amount of work undertaken by the dedicated and enthusiastic individuals in relation to the delivery of the road safety events detailed in the report.

The Chair agreed that the internal and external evaluation carried out for these events was important as the Service should continue to strive to improve delivery of these key messages, and build on its current successful delivery.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the Annual Road Safety Report 2014/15 be noted.**

**5 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT**

The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager introduced this report to Members which provided the Fire Authority with assurance that their statutory health and safety duties were being discharged satisfactorily. He explained that the appendix to the report provided Members and Senior Management with information in relation to the management of health, safety and wellbeing during 2014/15

He informed Members that the appendix to the report highlighted the improvements made over the last 12 months in health and safety. He referred to the reduction in the number of vehicle accidents reported, fewer minor accidents and the reduction in number of duty days lost as a result of injury accidents, all of which were as a result of proactive measures taken to improve the Service's health and safety performance. He confirmed that the Service continued to achieve a reduction in these areas year on year and that the Service was high performing when compared nationally.

He concluded by advising Members that a peer review audit of the health and safety management system had been carried out by managers from other fire and rescue services. He confirmed that the audit showed an improvement in the management of health and safety since the previous audit with only some minor recommendations for improvement identified that had been incorporated into an action plan for implementation.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Annual Health and Safety report for 2014/15 be approved.**

## **6 PREVENTION AND PROTECTION PROSECUTIONS UPDATE**

The Head of Protection provided Members with some background to this report, explaining that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 was introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 and widened the range of premises that fire and rescue services had powers to inspect. He advised Members that the Service's fire safety inspectors had a range of enforcement options available, from educating and informing through to prosecution and that the Service's strategy was to proactively support business and offer fire safety advice to make their premises safe from the risk of fire.

He referred Members to the report which detailed the number of ways in which a fire safety inspector may become aware of unsatisfactory business premises and the range of enforcement options available to the inspectors.

He concluded by advising Members that the budget for prosecutions was regularly reviewed and that any costs awarded to the Service by the court for a successful prosecution were set aside in a reserve to offset future prosecution costs.

Members queried whether any further inspections were carried out after a business premises had been successfully prosecuted. The Head of Protection confirmed that a premises assessed as high risk enough to be prosecuted by the Service would continue to be audited regularly or would have been prohibited for use if deemed unsafe in the event of a fire breaking out.

A Member asked if the officers detected any trends from the results of their inspections of business premises and whether officers prioritised such areas. The Head of Protection responded that a number of takeaways and fast food outlets had been identified as high risk, especially if there were persons identified as sleeping at the premises.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Service only made the decision to prosecute a business premises as a last resort when other methods of advice, education and enforcement had been exhausted. He also advised that there was currently an issue with fire risk assessors carrying out inadequate risk assessments on business premises. This had become apparent because subsequent inspections by the Service found the premises to be unsafe. He confirmed this was a problem that the Service was keen to pursue as the risk assessors were allowing higher risks to exist.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the Prevention and Protection Prosecutions update be noted;**
- [2] the approach to managing prosecutions and enforcement used by the Service continued to be endorsed; and**
- [3] the Prevention and Protection Prosecution update be added to the committee's Forward Work Programme for annual review.**

## **7 UPDATES**

### **Interim Bonfire Report**

The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager provided an interim update on the preventative and operational activities of the Service during the bonfire period 26 October 2015 – 9 November 2015. He confirmed a full report would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in February 2016. He provided Members with some headline figures, with 73 secondary fires being attended by the Service over this period, which was a significant reduction compared to 211 in 2009. He summarised the activity across the four constituent authorities with Cheshire East continuing to record the lowest number of secondary fires for this period.

The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager briefly summarised the prevention work carried out by the Service in partnership with the Police and local authorities and the education delivered by officers to KS4 in local schools.

Members queried whether there had been any reported injuries to fire crews and the Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager confirmed that there had been occasions when crews had withdrawn from an incident and asked for Police support but that no injuries had occurred.

A Member commented that the reported low number of secondary fires attended were very positive, especially in Cheshire East and queried whether this was in part due to the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) having an impact in Cheshire East. The Arson Reduction and Road Safety Manager confirmed that the RSLs were important partners and that the Service had engaged with RSLs in Halton where higher numbers of secondary fires were reported.

### **Staff Satisfaction Survey Update**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications presented a brief summary of the latest position following the recent completion of the 2015 Staff Satisfaction Survey. He explained that focus groups had been set up to discuss themes and issues that had emerged from the survey results and that an action

plan would be developed from the outcome of these groups and would be initially reported back to the Committee at its meeting in February 2016 and then six monthly thereafter.

He advised Members that one of the actions from the survey would be the implementation of a Watch Managers Development Programme by the Service's People and Development department which would look to address a number of the issues.

He concluded by assuring Members that confidentiality continued to be a key factor for staff and that, to maintain that confidentiality, the focus groups were being facilitated by the external company responsible for the main survey.

Members commented that it had been suggested that Members be involved in the focus groups for the staff satisfaction survey at a previous Members Planning Day. The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed that the issue had been raised with the company carrying out the survey and that they had advised against involving those perceived as senior management as it was likely to inhibit discussions and raise confidentiality concerns.

A Member queried which company carried out this work on the Service's behalf and who owned the data produced from the survey. The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed that the company, which had been successful in tendering for this work, was a company called People Insight and that the data would be received and owned by the Service after it had been anonymised.

### **Blue Light Collaboration Update**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications provided Members with a brief update on the Blue Light Collaboration programme. He advised that the Blue Light Executive Board had met recently and had discussed the baseline programme definition document. He confirmed that a report would be presented to Members at the Fire Authority meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> December for their consideration.

He advised Members that, as the communications lead for this project, he would continue to keep employees informed prior to any media coverage in co-ordination with the Police as there was increased national interest following the governments recent consultation paper on 'Enabling closer working between Emergency Services'.

### **2015 – 16 IRMP Projects Update**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications summarised the progress of the remaining projects within the IRMP programme that had not been previously covered within the mid year performance report earlier on the agenda. He advised that the 12 hour shift system from a previous IRMP was due to be introduced in January 2016 and that the on-call recruitment process was currently being fundamentally reviewed to identify improvements that could be made to increase the number of applicants that progressed through from the initial expressions of interest stage.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the updates be noted.**

**8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The forward work programme for 2015-16 had been submitted to Members and they were asked to agree any additional items that they wished to include for future meetings.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that Members had not identified any items during the meeting and asked if any additional items should be noted.

Member discussed the possibility of a Member task group for the Blue Light Collaboration Programme as this would provide Members with the opportunity to have an input into the programme. The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed that this was an area that would be addressed at the Fire Authority meeting in December, as part of the discussion on the Blue Light Collaboration report which would be presented to Members. He advised Members that, as requested at the recent Planning Day, a visit to the Police Headquarters was being arranged for Members and dates would be provided to them shortly.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the Blue Light Collaboration report being presented to Members would include a table which detailed a number of key decisions reserved for the Fire Authority that would require Member involvement.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer referred Members to the Forward Work Programme and suggested that the frequency of the reporting of Age UK Partnership Performance could be revised to become an annual report rather than six monthly. This would bring it in line with a number of other annual performance reports detailed on the work programme, and this was agreed by Members.

No further items were identified.