

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Standards, Audit and Performance Committee
Held in the Oak Room, Headquarters
On Wednesday, 2 October 2024 at 2.00 pm**

Present:

Councillors Burchett (Vice-chair), Davis, Evans, Hignett, Lea and Overton.

Officers

Simon Hardiman	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Samantha Burton	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	DCFO
Karen Gowreesunker	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Corporate Services)	ACFO CS
Jason Kirby	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)	ACFO SD
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Luke Grant	Station Manager Transformation and Collaboration	SMTC
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Supervisor	ESS
Aleks Zydek	Executive Support Officer	ESO

Vice-Chair introduced and welcomed Karen Gowreesunker and Jason Kirby who joined the Service as Interim ACFO CS and ACFO SD. He also welcomed back the CFO.

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Blundell, Pardy. Head of HR and Administration and Treasurer.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

3 Public Questions

None

4 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee, held on 10 July 2024, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5 Committee Training

The Committee was asked to consider what training if any they wished to receive in order for them to fulfil their role on the Committee.

The Members agreed to undertake following the training that was suggested by the Officers:

- Corporate Risk Management Training
- Performance Indicators Monitoring Training
- Governance and Effectiveness of Audit Committee Training.

Resolved that the Committee agreed to undertake Corporate Risk Management Training, Performance Indicator Monitoring Training and Governance and Effectiveness of Audit Committee Training.

6 Corporate Risk Management Summary

This report, presented by ACFO CS on behalf of PPM updated Members on the status of risks on the Corporate Risk Register.

The ACFO CS brought to the Members attention that one risk has been closed on Corporate Risk Register, one risk have been reduced and two new risks have been added since the last Standards Audit and Performance Committee meeting.

The ACFO noted that the risk relating to Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) has now been removed from the corporate risk register as number of issues with MDTs with have reduced.

She added that the two new risks added relate to Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) and the Learning Management System (LMS) The ACFO CS added that discussions are taking place with the supplier of the systems to managed contract. For LMS fixes are in place however, the paper will be issued to Senior Management Team (SMT) seeking to replace this system in the future.

The ACFO CS noted that the SMT is currently reviewing the Service approach to managing Corporate Risk and Members should expect some changes to corporate risk reports in the new year.

The Members questioned why risks raised in 2012 and 2013 are still on the register and if the Service is looking into closing those risks down. ACFO CS noted that as the review will identify if risks are relevant and up to date and if there are any risks that could be closed.

The Members required further information regarding information system the Service uses to communicate with Fire Service Vehicles. The CFO explained that airwave radio and MDTs are used, and the incident data is passed through those channels.

The Members expressed concern regarding low coverage of mobile phone data across Shropshire. The CFO stated that a deadline for replacement plan for airwave radio keeps being delayed and currently its planned for 2029. He added exercise around airwave assurance showed only 20-30% of the county covered which was alarming. He added that ICCS forms part of a wider Command-and-Control Project (C&C).

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

7 Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2024/25

This report, presented by ACFO CS on behalf of PPM summarised the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2024/25.

The ACFO CS noted that once the Service receives the detailed outcome of the HMI Inspection, the current Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan attached as an appendix to the report will be reviewed.

Resolved that the Committee note the progress made on the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.

Performance

8a Corporate Performance Indicators including On Call Duty System Performance – April to June 2024

This report presented a summary of the Service's performance from April to June 2023.

The SMTC presented the report and highlighted the following points to the Committee.

Corporate Performance Indicator (CPI)

CPI 1 – All Fires - 243

The SMTC added that this number below the expected tolerance for year to date so far. He noted that 47 of those incidents were attributed to accidental dwelling fires and 52 were deemed to be deliberate in nature which will be explored later in the report.

CPI 2 – Accidental Dwelling Fires - 47

CPI 3 – Deliberate Fire - 52

The SMTC noted that this is a decrease on previous year. He added that this CPI is a subject to trends and changes. Any fluctuations are monitored closely by prevention team who collaborates closely with the police.

CPI 4 – Fire Related Deaths and Serious Injuries - 3

The SMTC noted that all three were related to burns sustained in a fire.

CPI 5 – Fires Confined to Room of Origin – 93%

The SMTC highlighted that this CPI enables the Service to ascertain how its combine Prevention, Protection and Response capabilities have performed.

CPI 6 – Injuries Sustained to Staff Through Operational Activity - 3

The SMTC reported that out of these two injuries were sustained at incidents and one was training related

CPI 7 – Response Standard - 93%

The SMTC noted that reasons for incidents the Service did not meet the target Response Standards included: distance to incident, road closures, awaiting attendance of sufficient crew, difficult access issues and incident location different to mobilising information.

CPI 8 – Fires in Regulated Buildings - 29

This is within the tolerance. The monthly breakdown can be found on top of page 9 of the report. The SMTC reported that figures show 9% decrease when compared to 2023/24.

CPI 9 - Establishment, Diversity and Firefighter Competence

Competence remains high. This CPI is susceptible to fluctuation due to individuals being away from work due to long term absence or working on modified duties.

On Call Duty System Performance

The SMTC reported although down comparing to previous year On Call availability remains high. He added that introduction of banded contracts will help from recruitment perspective.

Members expressed concern over drop in on call availability at Shrewsbury station. The SMTC explained that he has reached out to Station Manager regarding the retention. He has been advised that the drop can be attributed to individual's lifestyle changes but with upcoming recruitment there is significant interest to join this station.

Members requested that in future reports that due to the reporting period being the previous quarter, a further section should be added to give an indication and comparison of the current quarter.

Members requested to include more narrative and provide snapshot around incidents when Standard Response Times were not achieved and by how much time. They also noted lower on call availability at the Newport station. The CFO explained that on call sustainability project highlighted the need to target certain areas within the county with Newport being one of the areas flagged. The SMTC added number of on call fire fighters may be low on station and therefore the percentages look big. The CFO added that there is also generational change when one retirement causes chain reaction and large group of fire fighters leaves the Service at the same time.

Members asked there is a risk around CPI 9 that with people awaiting training or renewal there could be possibility that appliance can attend and incident, but crew could lack skills to deal with it. The CFO explained that Group Support Team is utilised where possible and in worst case scenario the

appliance is not mobilised. He assured Members that when it comes to training the Service has a competence window that allows for staff statutory competencies not to expire. As an example, he highlighted that driving refresher is required every 5 years, but the Service has 3-year competency window.

Members questioned the minimum number of crew members needed for on call appliance to be mobilised. The ACFO SD explained that percentages in the table on page 10 represent amount of time the on-call stations are available.

ACFO SD commented that Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service is one of the highest performing services when it comes to on call availability. This is significant achievement.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

8b Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service Values and Culture Report Update

This report presented the Service's progress against the recommendations made to the sector in the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Values and Culture in the Fire and Rescue Services report.

The ACFO CS noted that in Recommendation 22 relating to 360 Feedback new approach has been implemented but it takes time to embed it and see results. She added that this will be a long process and noted that all remaining recommendations have been implemented and with the embedding of these processes still taking place.

Members praised the progress made.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

Standards

9 Review of Protocols

The ACFO CS presented this paper on behalf of Monitoring Officer. She noted that only minor amendments were made. She added that this protocol set how relationships between Members and the Officers are managed.

The ACFO noted that changes added can be seen in bold italics and parts removed are struck through. She added that Members can make further changes to the protocol.

Members noted that section 2.1 states '...serve only as long as their term of office lasts.' This should be amended as the Committee can replace a member at the leader discretion.

Members noted that in section 2.4 they would like words 'openness' and 'transparency' included to demonstrate collaborative approach of the Fire Authority. It was also highlighted that this approach works well in the Fire Authority's decision making despite political differences. The ACFO CS agreed that this protocol can be looked at in more detail with input from Members outside of the Committee meeting.

Members noted that new disciplinary policy for officers in roles of ACFO and above was agreed at July meeting of Fire Authority and this need to be reflected in the Protocol.

Members questioned if there is a need to add a sentence around confidentiality. The ACFO CS advised that working around confidentiality is included in Fire Authority Constitution and Members Code of Conduct therefore it is not required in the protocol.

Resolved that, having noted the minor amendments proposed to the Protocol on Member / Officer Relations and the Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality for Members, the Committee recommend these to the Fire Authority for approval.

Pensions Board

10 Pensions Board Minutes

The Committee received the minutes of the Authority's Pension Board meeting that was held on 10 September 2024.

Resolved that the Committee receive and note the minutes of the Pension Board meeting held on 10 September 2024.

11 Pensions Board Update

The ACFO CS gave an update verbal on Pensions Board activity and reported that the Pension Board meeting due to take place in July was cancelled which left a significant gap between March and September meetings.

The ACFO CS reported that she was pleased to meet the board as new a Chair. She noted that Terms of Reference and Conflict of Interest policy were both agreed at the meeting. The ACFO CS added that Pensions Board risk register was reviewed and brought up to date and work on actions continues in the background.

The ACFO CS reported that the Board reviewed the performance of the Service pensions administrator West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF), which is overall positive.

The ACFO CS provided Members with update on Pension Exercises and noted that payments are being processed. With the McCloud Exercise the WYPF is currently awaiting further guidance from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs before they will be able to issue payments.

With regards to Matthews Exercise the ACFO CS reported that the Service have written to a number of retired On Call Fire fighters and received low number of returned expression of interests forms back. She added that the Pensions Officer is working with Trade Unions to reach those individuals who failed to respond.

Resolved that the Committee note the update.

12 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a to the Local Government Act 1972

13 Exempt Minutes (Paragraph 4)

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Standards, Audit and Performance Committee, held on 10 July 2024, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14 Corporate Risk Management Summary (Paragraph 4)

Resolved that the Committee receive and note exempt Appendix C to report 6 – Corporate Risk Management Summary

The meeting closed at 3 pm.

Chair _____

Date _____