

**Minutes of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Strategy and Resources Committee
held in the Oak Room, Headquarters
on Thursday, 20 March 2025 at 2.00 pm**

Present

Members

Councillors Aldcroft, Handley (Vice Chair) and Wynn

Officers

Simon Hardiman	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Sam Burton	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	DCFO
Jason Kirby	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)	ACFO (SD)
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Germaine Worker	Head of Human Resources and Administration	HHRA
Natalie Parkinson	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer	EDO
Luke Grant	Station Manager / Transformation and Collaboration	SM (T&C)
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESS

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Cook, Hartin (Chair), Minnery and Price
James Walton (Treasurer)
Joanne Coadey
Karen Gowreesunker

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

3 Public Questions

None

4 Non-Exempt Minutes

Resolved that the non-exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee, held on 29 January 2025, be agreed, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5 Review of Corporate Performance Indicators and Proposed Tolerances for 2025//26

This report presented the agreed Corporate Performance Indicators (CPIs) for 2025/26, to be approved by the Strategy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20 March 2025. The report also included the data provided to the Committee to inform its decision making.

The SM (T&C) presented this report and explained that the CPIs were introduced in 2020, are reviewed prior to the start of each financial year and performance against them is monitored through the Standards, Audit and Performance (SAP) Committee. The current suite of CPIs is set out in Section 3 of the report, together with details of the sustainability and financial CPIs that have been implemented in response to requests from the Fire Authority.

The proposals within the report are based on actual performance during the first three-quarters of 2024/25 with final figures based on forecasted performance for the last quart of the year being in line with quarters 1 to 3

CPI 1 – All Fires

It is recommended that a tolerance of 5% is maintained for this indicator as performance for the full year is predicted to be 933 fires which is an expected decrease of 11% on the total of 1048 fires in 2023/24.

CPI 2 – Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)

It is proposed that the 10% tolerance for this CPI is maintained as it is predicted that final figures for 2024/25 will be within the existing tolerance figures.

CPI 3 – Deliberate Fires

It is recommended that the current tolerance of 7% be maintained as it is predicted that there will be a reduction of up to -13.8% in the number of deliberate fires which will be above tolerance levels. The Service will continue to work closely with its partners to maintain performance against this CPI.

CPI 4- Fire Related Deaths and Serious Injuries

Tolerance levels are not set for this indicator as it is not considered appropriate to do so. The Service's aspiration is to keep the number of fire related deaths and serious injuries at as low a level as possible, and ideally at zero.

CPI 5 – Fire Confined to Room of Origin

The recommendation is that the 2% tolerance be maintained for this CPI. Performance against CPI is susceptible to a range of variations, but the CPI is critical to enabling the Service to assess the effectiveness of its Prevention, Protection and Response activity.

CPI 6 – Injuries Sustained to Staff through Operational Activity

As the Service's ambition is to achieve zero injuries to staff, it is not considered appropriate to apply a tolerance to this CPI. The Service will, therefore, continue to provide a narrative report to Authority on a case-by-case basis.

CPI 7 – Response Standard – monitored against 3 categories of Urban; Town and Fringe; and Rural

The Service will continue to monitor against these 3 areas as separate measures and report to Committee, comparing each independently against the target figure of meeting these standards on 85% of occasions.

CPI 8 – Fires in Regulated Buildings

It is recommended that the current 7% tolerance is maintained for this CPI as it is predicted that performance for 2024/25 will be 112 incidents compared to 127 in 2023/24, which is a decrease of 11.9%

CPI 9 – Diversity, Establishment and Firefighter Competence

There are no tolerance levels attached to this CPI but there is an attainment rate of 90% against each skill set. Analysis of core competencies over the reporting period shows that the Service continues to achieve the attainment figure of 90% against each skill set.

Members asked if the deliberate fires are in certain areas or if they are spread across the county. The SM (T&C) explained that there are hotspots within the county. The Prevention Team are working with partners to address these. Members then asked if these are mainly related to started by youngsters. The CFO explained that there has been a reduction in deliberate fire setting by young people but there has been a trend in the Wellington area, which is linked to unrest between family groups.

Referring to CPI 7, Members queried if exception reports are provided for incidents where the response time is not met. The SM/T&C confirmed that they are. Incident Commanders are prompted to provide an explanation for the expected response time not being met which allows in-depth assessment of performance against this CPI.

The DCFO explained that work is ongoing to define what the Service's approach to CPIs will be going forward. This work is taking into account the areas highlighted in the HMICFRS Inspection Report and the associated Cause of Concern. Risk is also being reviewed as part of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). As the CPIs have not been revised for several years, it is timely that they are reviewed; this will also clarify what success

There are two strands to the CPI review work; firstly, a review of the CPIs to ensure they remain relevant, and secondly, the development of a suite of Corporate Health Indicators (CHIs). The CHIs will not be reportable to central government as the CPIS are, but will facilitate monitoring, assurance and evaluation of performance against the Service's strategy.

Once developed that CPIs and CHIs will need to be trialled before they go live to assess what data is needed for them and the information that is output from them. The aim is that they will provide updates on several areas of the Service and produce information that can be used to drive activity within those areas. Significant areas of focus will be People and Digital and Data. A timeline for the work has been developed and a report will be brought to Fire Authority in June 2025 for sign-off.

Resolved that the Committee

- a) note the report and acknowledged the work undertaken to determine the Corporate Performance Indicators for 2025/26; and
- b) approve the agreed Corporate Performance Indicators for 2025/26, as set out in the report.

6 Committee Work Plan 2025/26

The ESS provided a verbal update on Strategy and Resources Committee Work Plan.

Resolved that the Committee note the update.

7 Committee Terms of Reference

The ESS provided a verbal update on the Terms of Reference of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Resolved that the Committee note the update.

8 Review of Member Role Descriptions

The ESS provided a verbal update on the Role Descriptions for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Resolved that the Committee note the update.

9 People Strategy End of Year Report

This report provided an update on the achievements that have been made against the People Strategy 2021-2025. The HHRA presented the report and highlighted the achievements that had been realised against the existing plans. The HHRA also confirmed that the People Strategy covers all sections of the Service.

Members queried if the Service has enough apprentices coming through. The HHRA explained that it does and that this report is focussed on existing staff. It is positive that the Service does not have any residual funds left in the levy pot at the end of each month as this reflects the success of apprenticeships both as a recruitment path and as a development offering to existing employees.

The HHRA highlighted that the Service has increased FREC competence levels within its operational staff from 65% of the workforce in October 2023 to 80% in February 2025.

Members asked if there is Government guidance that all staff should be first aid trained. The ACFO (SD) explained that this relates to operational trauma response. First Response Emergency Care (FREC) gives training to the level between technician and paramedic. There is currently no national requirement for the Service to do this, but it is considered that it is the right thing to do. This view is also supported by evidence from the Clinical Governance Review. The ACFO (SD) added that FREC training is delivered on a continual basis to maintain competence due to level of skills required.

A query was raised as to whether the Service records the length of time that it has to wait for ambulance attendance at incidents. The ACFO (SD) confirmed that it does and works ambulance partners to address issues. Part of the Service's broader response includes gaining entry and the Service should not be in attendance before the ambulance in these situations, but this does not always happen.

The CFO added that issues have been experienced both during, and post, the Covid pandemic. One of the issues is that the Ambulance Service is driven by demand but is under-resourced to meet that demand. Calls are then being downgraded as the person affected has a medically trained person with them. Members asked if West Mercia Police have the same skills. The ACFO (SD) explained that some police officers do have specific training which they can transfer across to trauma response, but this is not widespread across the Police Force.

Referring to DBS vetting, as mentioned on page 8 of the report, the HHRA confirmed that a system is in place to ensure that DBS checks are completed on a 3-yearly basis.

Members asked if employees complete defibrillator training. It was confirmed that they do as there are defibrillators on all fire appliances and also for firefighter safety. Members reported that there has been increased spending on maintenance of defibrillators by town and parish councils and this is viewed as good value for what it delivers. Defibrillation within 8 minutes gives a 90% chance of heart attack survival. This decreases by 10% for every minute after that.

The HHRA concluded that the People Strategy, and the four plans that underpin it, provide the framework to support the aims and objectives of the Service's Community Risk Management Plan CRMP as it addresses how the Service attracts, recruits and retains staff.

Resolved that the Committee noted the contents of the report.

10 Gender Pay Gap Report

This report outlined Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Information Regulations 2017) and details its annual Gender Pay Gap figures for 2024 and the differences in average earnings between its male and female employees.

Members asked why the Service has a gender pay gap if salaries are the same and male and female employees are on the same salary scale. The EDIO explained that it relates to how many people are sitting on the payband, for example SMs and above. Another factor is that part-time roles tend to be more support service based and there tends to be more women employed in these roles. The gender pay gap is about using positive action to attract more female employees into roles. The Service is, however, performing much better than the national average; the median pay gap is 0% which is very positive.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the 2025 report (for 2024 data) for publishing on SFRS Website and the Government Website gov.co.uk www.gov.uk

11 Progress on Implementation of the Equality Action Plan

This report updated Members on progress on the main actions identified in the Equality Scheme Action Plan from March 2024 to February 2025.

The HHRA presented the report and explained that the Service has a 3-year Equality Plan in place and this report sets out the progress in meeting this Plan. The Equality Plan is updated on a quarterly basis and ongoing monitoring is undertaken by the Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Steering Group.

Members asked if male firefighters have accepted females into firefighting community. The CFO and DCFO explained they were on the same initial training course and do not know any different regarding female firefighters. The CFO advised that he is not aware of issues related to this within the Service. The SM T&C added that Watches value the skills and knowledge etc of people from different backgrounds.

The DCFO acknowledged that she is aware that some women do experience challenges at all levels of the fire and rescue service. The best approach to dealing with this is to give women the confidence to call out behaviour that is unsupportive. This allows issues to be uncovered and dealt with when found.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report.

12 Equality Monitoring Statistics

This report provided Members with an overview of the Service's Equality Monitoring Statistics and how it uses this data.

The EDIO presented this report and explained that the Service uses the equality monitoring data to analyse the workforce and identify areas that need focus.

Work is being undertaken to encourage staff to update their equality data to ensure that it is of suitable quality.

The data is currently fairly static as there has been no significant turnover of staff which leads to big changes in numbers.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report.

13 Reasonable Adjustments Update

This report provided Members with an overview of the reasonable adjustments made to support employees in their work roles.

The EDIO presented this report and advised that there are currently 46 live Reasonable Adjustment cases. These are mostly related to neurodiversity, mainly dyslexia, but there has been an increase in ADHD cases. All Reasonable Adjustments are based on, and tailored to, the needs of the individual concerned.

The Workplace Adjustments Passport is being promoted across the Service and there has been an increase in employees completing these.

The Service has been using Access to Work to carry out chair assessments, but they currently have a 6-month waiting list, so other providers have been used to provide these assessments.

Members asked if the Service receives any funding from the local or national NHS to support the provision of Reasonable Adjustments. The EDIO confirmed that it does not. Some funding is available from Access to Work, but this can be difficult to access, with the funding criteria being that the Service pays for the first £1000 of any costs, due to the size of the organisation (250+ employees).

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report

14 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that having been satisfied in all the circumstances of the case that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information, that Members formally resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

15 Exempt Minutes

Resolved that the exempt minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee, held on 29 January 2025, be agreed, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Ends 3.30 pm

Chair _____

Date _____