

**POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the  
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE  
COMMITTEE held in the Fire Authority  
Rooms, Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston  
Mere, Sunderland on MONDAY 4 JULY  
2011 at 10.30 a.m.

**Present:**

Councillor N. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors M. Forbes, Mulvenna and. Padgett

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Ahad and Heron.

**Declarations of Interest**

None.

**Minutes**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 10 January 2011 (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

At this juncture the Chairman requested and it was agreed to vary the order of business to consider Item 5 – Strategy and Performance Arrangements in TWFR at Item 4 on the agenda as it would provide a useful context setter for new Members prior to consideration of the end of year performance report.

## **Strategy and Performance Arrangements in TWFR**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Fire Officer to update Members on the arrangements for strategic planning and performance management in TWFR.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided a presentation to Members which set out TWFR's understanding of performance management in its broadest sense, and described the mechanisms through which direction was set and performance was managed and improved.

TWFR understands performance management to cover the whole system of activities that determine the vision and direction of the Authority; the plans for how the vision will be delivered; the delivery of the planned actions; and the monitoring and review of the actions the Authority take to make sure they have achieved the desired outcomes.

This simple "plan, do, review" approach covers all activities undertaken by the organisation.

In terms of planning, Members viewed a diagram which showed how strategic priorities were set in the context of a number of drivers, after which a "golden thread" of intention runs through different levels of plan to ensure everyone is pulling in the same direction.

In terms of action, teams and individuals deliver the actions set out in their service plans throughout the year, and managers use the plans to ensure their people are delivering what is required. If any training or development is required to enable people to deliver planned activities, this is picked up through the organisation's personal development process.

A Service Delivery Performance Action Group meets regularly to discuss the effectiveness of the actions that are being taken to deliver priorities (e.g. reductions in dwelling or deliberate fires) and share ideas about what works well.

As part of this quarterly process, performance was compared against other metropolitan FRAs through an informal benchmarking group supported by TWFR. This allows the Authority to gauge how they are doing against other similar areas.

The Authority has always welcomed external review and challenge as a tool in understanding where improvement can be made. In recent years the main focus of external challenge has been the Audit Commission which provided compulsory inspection and review on an annual basis.

The service's commitment to independent, sector led improvement is demonstrated through its continuing to seek opportunities to benchmark service quality. During 2010/11 this has resulted in:

- a successful peer review under the Operational Assessment process managed by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA). Officers of the Authority are now leading work to review and update this process on behalf of CFOA
- achievement of the Gold level of Investors in People (the first FRA to achieve this level of award)
- commitment to achieve British Standard 25999 for Business Continuity with assessment expected in 2012

Councillor N. Forbes commented on the role of the Committee and advised that it essentially acted as an early warning system. It was important to link issues that were identified through performance with how the organisation responds in future.

2. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

### **End of Year (April-March) Performance Report 2010/11**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer to present the Q4 (April – March) performance of the Authority against the targets for 2010/11.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman welcomed Mark Hedley, Corporate Development Manager to the Committee and invited him to present the report.

Mark Hedley explained how the report was structured and the graphical information presented. The report had been structured to demonstrate the Authority's performance in relation to the National Indicators (NI's) related to fire and local indicators reflecting organisational priorities. In order to reflect the delivery of services and performance at a lower level the report also contained data relating to district performance.

To reflect the overall performance of the TWFRS versus other Metropolitan FRS a comparison (where available) had been provided against the average and quartile performance. This level of comparative performance had also been reflected at district level to highlight the performance of each district when compared against themselves.

The performance of each indicator was colour coded to reflect the following:

- Forecasted performance against the end of year performance for the previous year
- Forecasted performance against the end of year target

A traffic light system was used to highlight the performance related to each of the indicators:-

Where the target is likely to be missed by more than 2.5%, the colour was red;  
 Where the projected figure was within - 2.5% of the target, the colour was yellow;  
 Where the target is forecast to be achieved the colour was green.  
 Where no target has been set the cell remained white.

The performance report had been divided into the following sections in order to provide a comprehensive overview based on national and local priorities:-

### **National Priorities**

#### **NI49 Number of Primary fires and related fatalities and non fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks):**

- **NI49i** Total number of primary fire per 100,000 population (LI29)
- **NI49ii** Total number of fatalities due to primary fires per 100,000 population (LI2)
- **NI49iii** Total number of non fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks) per 100,000 population (LI28)

#### **NI33 Arson Incidents:**

- **NI33i** Total number of deliberate primary and secondary fires per 10,000 population (LI33)
- **NI33iii** Total number of deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population (LI16)

### **Local Priorities**

#### **Emergency Response:**

- **LI 5** Number of injuries from all fires
- **LI 8.1** Number of accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings
- **LI 12.1** % of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate
- **LI 21** Number of malicious false alarm calls attended
- **LI 22.1** Number of false alarms due to automatic fire detection from non domestic properties per 1000 non domestic premises.

#### **Diversity and Equality:**

- **LI86** % of workforce from ethnic minority communities
- **LI85** % of workforce who are women

#### **Absence and Retirement:**

- **LI82** Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff

#### **Environmental:**

- **EM5** CO2 reduction from local authority operations (reported at end of year)

Mark Hedley then took the Committee through each National and Local Priority in turn.

### **NI49i Number of Primary Fires per 100,000 population (LI29):**

The Authority attended 196.3 (2141) primary fires per 100,000 population by the end of 2010/11. However, the number of attendances during Q4 were comparable to 2009/10.

Based on the end of year performance of 196.3 (2141), the Authority has achieved its target of 214.7 (2375) primary fires per 100,000 population by 10% (234).

This performance resulted in the Authority remaining below the average of the Metropolitan FRS and within the best quartile, reflecting the positive comparison of performance.

The district of Newcastle had reported the highest number of such incidents, reflecting the high number of attendances in comparison with other districts throughout the year.

The district of Newcastle attended the greatest number of such incidents during Q1 with 33% (202) of such incidents igniting in a road vehicle.

Despite the district of Sunderland reporting the second highest number of such incidents, it reported a reduction of 19% (132) incidents when compared against the previous year.

Councillor M. Forbes enquired whether statistics drilled down into types of accommodation (for example student accommodation) and was advised by Chris Lowther that they did. Notably incidents tended to concentrate on areas of deprivation and mirrored worklessness trends. The Service Delivery Performance Action Group would look in greater detail at the data breakdown.

In response to a question from Councillor N. Forbes, Tom Copling advised that smoking was a contributing factor. He also informed the committee that people with mobility problems were also a vulnerable group and it was important the organisation continued to work with health partners in this instance to target these groups.

### **NI49ii Number of fatalities due to primary fires per 100,000 population (LI2):**

The Authority has reported 3 fatalities from a primary fire during 2010/11, with 2 of these occurring during Q4. Despite these fatalities the performance reflected a reduction of one fatality when compared 2009/10.

Based on the end of year performance of 0.28 (3) fatalities due to primary fires per 100,000 population, the Authority had achieved its 2010/11 target of less than 0.46 (5).

As throughout 2008/09 and 2009/10, the Authority has reported performance below the Mets FRS average figure reported of 0.7 fatalities per 100,000 population and remains below the best quartile.

The 3 fatalities occurred in Newcastle, North Tyneside and Gateshead all from single

occupancy dwellings.

All fatalities from accidental fires have ignited in rooms outside the kitchen since 2007/08.

**NI49iii Number of non fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks) due to primary fires per 100,000 population (LI28):**

The Authority had recorded 8.4 (92) non fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks) due to primary fires per 100,000 population by the end of 2010/11, reflecting a reduction of 9% (12) by the end of 2009/10.

In comparison with the other Met FRS the Authority remains to be below the average of 9.9 casualties. The performance of TWFRS was only bettered by South Yorkshire (5.51) and West Midlands (5.54) in 2009/10.

The district of Newcastle reported the highest number of such incidents with 9.3 (28) injuries, this was due to an increased number of such injuries (9) during Q4.

Gateshead reported a high number of such injuries due to their performance in Q1 (9). However, the district reported the least number of such injuries during Q2 (2) and Q3 (1).

Sunderland reported one of the lowest number of such injuries (18), reflecting the 19% reduction in the number of primary fires report in LI29.

Councillor Padgett enquired whether bonfires were included in the statistics and was advised that they were, however the statistics did need to be treated with a degree of caution as different authorities used different definitions of 'deliberate'.

In response to a question from Councillor M. Forbes as to why there was a notable increase of incidences in April, Chris Lowther advised that it was most likely due to the clocks going forward and young people were spending the evening outside. As there had been a great focus on the successful darker nights campaign, this served to highlight the variance in April.

Chris Lowther advised the Committee that this indicator was heavily reliant on help from partners. He warned that in future this indicator would be affected by the reduction in, for example, youth services, PCSO's and street wardens.

Councillor M. Forbes asked if perpetrators were ever caught. Chris Lowther reported that unless they were persistent and dangerous fire setters they were infrequently caught. There tended to be a concentration on partnership work and prevention.

**NI33i Number of all deliberate fires per 10,000 population (LI33):**

2010/11, a decrease of 6% (354) compared to 2009/10.

This performance was supported through a reduction of 12% (512) being reported in

such incidents during Q2, Q3 and Q4 combined.

As a result of this performance the Authority has achieved the target of 58.4 (6359), reflecting a reduction of 5% (292).

The Authority's end of year performance remained above the average for the Met FRS's and slightly above the worst quartile. Only Merseyside FRS reported a greater number (68.9) of such incidents in 2009/10.

As throughout 2009/10 and 2010/11 the Sunderland district recorded the highest number of deliberate fires, accounting for 34% of the Service total. However, it reported a decrease of 12% (270) when compared against 2009/10, the largest improvement of any district.

The district of Gateshead were the only district not to report an improvement on the number of such incidents attended by the end of 2010/11 compared against 2009/10, an increase of only 1 incident.

### **NI33iii Number of deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population (LI16):**

The Authority recorded 47.3 (5155) deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population by the end of 2010/11, reflecting a decrease of 2% (115) on the performance reported at the end of 2009/10.

As a result of the 2010/11 performance, the Authority has achieved the target of 47.9 (5219), a reduction of 1% (64).

The number of such incidents attended during Q2 (1144) and Q3 (1220) contributed to this performance with 11% and 21% reductions respectively. This supports previous evidence of Q1 accounting for the highest number of such incidents during the year.

Compared to the Met FRS, the Authority's end of year performance remained above the worst quartile, only Merseyside FRS reported a higher number (54.7) in 2009/10.

Sunderland continues to record the highest number (1812) of such incidents by the end of 2010/11 when compared against the other districts. However, it reported a decrease of 8% (157) incidents when compared against the same period in 2009/10.

The districts of Newcastle and Sunderland are the only districts to report a decrease in such incidents. The district of Gateshead reported the largest increase in such incidents, 5% (36).

### **LI5 Number of injuries from all fires**

The Authority has recorded 228 injuries from all fires by the end of 2010/11, a decrease of 5% (12 injuries) on the performance reported during 2009/10.

This performance was supported by a reduction in the number of such incidents during Q4 when the Authority recorded 15% (11) fewer injuries.

As a result of this performance the Authority had failed to achieve its target of 224. However, resulting in the lowest number of such injuries ever reported. In total 40% (90) of such injuries resulted in the casualty going to hospital.

The average age of a fire victim was 45 years with 51% (115) male and 49% (109) female. The average age of a casualty suffering from serious injuries resulting in hospital treatment was 35 with 71% (12) casualties being male.

The districts of Newcastle reported the highest number of injuries from all fires, with the most (19) injuries being reported during Q4, with the average age of a casualty being 38 year of age.

The district of Newcastle was the only district to report a greater number of such injuries in 2009/10, with an increase of 19% (9 injuries).

### **LI8.1 Number of accidental fires in dwellings per 10,000 dwellings**

The Authority attended 13.7 (650) accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings by the end of 2010/11, a decrease of 8% (60 incidents) compared with 2009/10, continuing to reflect the lowest number of such incidents reported by the Authority.

The Authority attended the majority of such incidents during Q1 (171), reflecting the performance reported in 2009/10 and previous years.

As a result of this performance the Authority has achieved its target (14.5) for 2010/11 by 5% (36).

The majority of such incidents occurred within the kitchen (63%), with South Tyneside (72%), remaining to account for the highest percentage of such incidents occurring in the kitchen at district level.

The district of Newcastle continue to report the largest percentage of accidental non kitchen fires with a total of 39% (75), reflecting the targeted Home Safety Check initiatives carried out within the area.

### **LI12.1 % of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate**

The Authority has attended 15.1% (121) of dwelling fires where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate with the main contributor to the alarm not activating being due to a missing battery 12% (14), not being close enough to the detector 30% (36) and the area not being covered by the system 18% (22).

As a result of this performance the Authority had improved on the 2009/10 end of year performance by 4.6% but failed to achieve its target of 14.5%.



The Gateshead district maintained to report the lowest percentage of such incidents, reflecting the number of attendances to accidental dwelling fires (LI8).

The district of North Tyneside reported the highest percentage (26) of such incidents with 5 due to a faulty/missing battery and 7 were the fire was not close enough to the alarm.

This indicator has been revised for 2011/12 reporting onwards to reflect the number of alarms that were present at an incident.

In response to a question from Councillor Padgett regarding the take up of alarms and home safety checks, Tom Copling advised that last year the authority had undertaken 30,000 home safety checks and a great deal of detectors were distributed.

### **LI21 Number of malicious false alarm calls attended**

The Authority attended 271 malicious false alarm calls by the end of 2010/11, a decrease of 4% (11 calls) when compared against the same period in 2009/10.

Despite this reduction the Authority has missed its target of 237 calls by 13% (34 calls). However, this performance reflects the continued downward trend for such incidents.

The districts of Newcastle reported the greatest number (96) of such incidents by the end of 2010/11. The district attended 33 calls during Q4, the highest of any district in that particular period and the greatest number during any quarter in 2010/11 within the district area.

The district of North Tyneside was the only district to report a reduction (37%) in the number of such calls in 2010/11 when compared with the previous year. Historically the Authority has reported the greatest number of such incidents during Q1, reflecting the increased number of deliberate fires reported during this period.

### **LI 22.1 Number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms from non domestic premises per 1,000 non domestic premises**

The Authority attended 109.5 (3436) false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms from non domestic premises per 1,000 non domestic premises by the end of 2010/11, reflecting a decrease of 1% (39) when compared against the same period in 2009/10.

As a result of this performance the Authority has improved on the end of year performance reported in 2009/10. However, it has missed the target of 102.2 (3206) false alarms.

The district of Newcastle continued to report the greatest number of such incidents by the end of 2010/11, with 161.8 (1508) per 1,000 non domestic premises, 44% of all nondomestic false alarms in Tyne and Wear. This reflects a decrease of 1% (17)

against the same period in 2009/10. This performance was supported through two of the top three (RVI and General Hospital) repeat offenders for such incidents being located within the Newcastle district.

In total 532 properties were attended more than once by the end of 2010/11, an increase of 7% (33) when compared against the same period in 2009/10.

### **LI 86 % of workforce from an ethnic minority community**

This is new local indicator introduced by the Authority in 2009/10 and as a result there is no comparison with performance prior to 2008/09.

The percentage of the Authority's workforce from an ethnic minority community stands at 2.4%, an increase of 0.2% compared with the end of year performance in 2009/10.

Based on this performance, the Authority is within the variance of the target of 2.7% which has also been set for 2011/12.

This performance represented 28 employees out of a workforce of 1183 posts. There are 17 uniformed staff within the organisation who are from an ethnic minority community, reflecting 1.9% of the uniformed workforce.

### **LI85 % of workforce who are women**

This indicator was introduced by the Authority in 2009/10; as a result there is no comparison with performance prior to 2008/09.

The percentage of women working for the Authority currently stands at 20.3%, a reduction of 1% compared against the performance reported at the end of 2010/11.

Based on this performance, the Authority is within the variance of its target of 22.1%, based on current staffing levels this equates to a shortfall of 23 women.

This performance reflects 240 employees out of a total workforce of 1183 posts, reflecting a reduction on the number (260) reported at the end of 2009/10.

### **LI82 Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff**

The proportion of working days / shifts lost to sickness absence by all staff by the end of 2010/11 is 6.05. This reflects a decrease of 1.6 days compared with 2009/10.

The performance of 6.05 days / shifts reflects an increase of 1.44 compared to Q3, however, it is the lowest number of days / shifts reported at the end of this period since the measure was introduced.

Despite the reduction the Authority exceeded its target of 6 days / shifts by 0.05 days / shifts. However, targets were achieved for wholetime uniformed and rider staff.

Despite the district of Sunderland reporting the highest level of sickness for any district it reported the smallest increase during Q4.

The 'other' members of staff reflect the highest number of days / shifts lost to sickness across the Authority, with 6.79 days / shifts by the end of 2010/11, an increase of 1.6 days/shifts compared to the end of Q3.

Councillor N. Forbes advised that the broad message was that performance remained good overall. Future performance would also depend on partners and how they respond to the cuts in government funding.

RESOLVED that the Committee

- i) Note and endorse the contents of the report, and
- ii) Agree to the publication of the performance report

### **District Plans 2011/12**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to The Authority and the Finance Officer to inform the committee of the development process undertaken to complete the District Plans 2011/12 and their related priorities.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that District Plans were a key element of TWFRAs performance management framework, representing the element of the "golden thread" which connects corporate strategy with delivery on the ground. A very important element of District Plans is the ability to flex the focus of the service, within the overall direction set by TWFRAs Strategic Community Safety Plan and IRMP, to reflect the difference in the places and community priorities within Tyne and Wear.

Following extensive discussion and consultation the District Plans provide a focus for the setting of priorities which are devolved to district level based on balancing corporate direction with understanding of local risk and priorities.

In order to reflect the outcomes of the decision making process the District Plans clearly highlight which of our local priorities (related to national indicator's) are measured at district level. In addition to this each of the District Plans clearly highlights the additional LI's and which of these have been determined as a priority at district level.

Members were asked to look at their own district plan and feed any comments back.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee note and endorse the contents of the report.

(Signed) N. Forbes  
Chairman