

# Birmingham City Council

## City Council

1 February 2022



**Subject:** Lead Member Report: West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

**Report of:** Cllr Zafar Iqbal, Lead Member

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

### 1 Recommendation

1.1 That the report be noted

### 2 West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (WMFRA)

2.1 The first Fire Authority meeting for the new Municipal Year 2021-2022, took place on Monday 04 October and was conducted as a hybrid meeting. The following public business items discussed were:

#### 2.1.1 Community Risk Management Plan Objectives

In February 2021 the Fire Authority approved its 3 year rolling Strategy and the development of Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) proposals. These had been identified from an analysis of foreseeable risk to fire and other related incidents across the West Midlands Conurbation.

These proposals sought to identify how West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) could maintain and improve its delivery of services to local communities. These proposals continue to be developed and trialled working with all key stakeholders for implementation from April 2022 onwards.

The report taken to Fire Authority, outlined to Members the Strategic CRMP objectives and the additional options that are being progressed in line with CRMP objectives to support the delivery of the 3-year rolling Strategy were also referenced. Information is provided below on the Technical Rescue Unit at Sutton Coldfield, which is a key part of working towards these

objectives. Future S41 reports will provide further updates on the CRMP objectives as they progress.

#### 2.1.2 Decisions made under 'Matters of Urgency' - Retention of retired employees

The decision made under 'matters of urgency' as per the report, introduced a new Retention Policy to provide an additional workforce planning tool and form part of the re-organisation, redeployment, redundancy policy. The policy will enhance the management of corporate risk by retaining key knowledge, skills and experience using temporary or fixed term contracts where this is considered appropriate. In addition, it will enable and support WMFRA to improve its talent management succession planning processes. It may also support financial efficiencies in support of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

#### 2.1.3 Audit Findings Report 2020-2021

Grant Thornton's report informed Members of the audit work undertaken and the key messages arising from the external audit work undertaken during the year. The Audit Findings Report is designed to support the Auditor's opinions and conclusions and is a requirement of the Code of Audit Practice.

#### 2.1.4 Statement of Accounts 2020-2021

The Statement of Accounts were approved at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting, that took place on Monday 27 September 2021, to ensure the publication deadline of 30 September 2021 (amended by the Accounts & Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021), be met. A copy of the statement of Accounts, taken to Audit and Risk Committee, can be found on the Fire Authority's website.

#### 2.1.5 Monitoring of Finances

This report deals with the monitoring of the finances of the Authority in the current financial year and covers revenue expenditure and the Capital Programme. Expenditure is compared with a profile of the Authority's budget. A copy of the report can be found on the Fire Authority's website.

#### 2.1.6 Contract Awards Summary for Period to 30 September 2021

In accordance with the WMFRA Constitution, a retrospective twice yearly summary report of tender contract awards in excess of £250,000 are submitted to the Fire Authority for information purposes. A summary of tender award contracts can be found in Appendix 1 of the report on the Fire Authority's website

### **3 WMFS Activities during the last quarter**

#### **3.1 Full Inspection**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have recommenced their full Inspection regime for Round 2. West Midlands has been moved to the final tranche of Services for inspection, at dates to be confirmed for between March and July 2022.

As part of the Inspectorates initial assessment of Fire and Rescue Services, WMFS received its first full inspection in 2018/19.

In general, during the first full inspection, the Inspectorate found that:

1. The extent to which the service is effective at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks is **good**.
2. The extent to which the service is efficient at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks is **good**.
3. The extent to which the service looks after its people is **good**.

The Authority was particularly proud to find that WMFS was to be the only Fire and Rescue Service to be rated '**outstanding**' for how effective the Service was in responding to fires and other emergencies.

The COVID inspection that took place in 2020 found that WMFS was managing its services well during the pandemic.

### 3.2 White Paper on Fire Reform

As part of the conclusion of Part One of the Police and Crime Commissioner Review, the Home Secretary outlined proposals to reform governance within the fire sector as part of a ministerial statement published in March 2021. As a result of the proposals, the statement included the announcement of the publication of a White Paper which will be used to set out the reform agenda in further detail. It is expected that the White Paper will be published later this year (October 2021 onwards).

### 3.3 Core Code of Ethics

A Core Code of Ethics has been published for Fire and Rescue Services, following collaboration between the Local Government Association, National Fire Chief Council and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. The Core Code will help the service continuously improve culture and workforce diversity.

### 3.4 Helping to battle devastating Greece wildfires

In support of the National Resilience arrangements and capability, West Midlands firefighters flew out to Greece to help battle wildfires that devastated the country. Wildfires had swept across the country following the most severe heatwave in 30 years, which had seen temperatures soared to 45 deg (113F).

### 3.5 Sutton Coldfield Fire Station to host Technical Rescue Unit from May 2022

From 2022, Sutton Coldfield Fire Station will become WMFS' third Technical Rescue Station, home to some of the most highly trained firefighters in the service. As well as responding to life-risk incidents (referred to as "Category One") such as

dwelling fires and road traffic collisions, they will also be trained to respond to more specialist incidents. This includes rope rescue, water rescue, collapsed building structures and terrorist attacks.

This change has been made to ensure that WMFS remains as ready as possible to respond to a growing range of risks and threats, including climate change. It ensures that WMFS will not only have 50% more TRU trained staff, but also better coverage in the north of the West Midlands conurbation, to supplement the existing units in Wednesbury and Bickenhill.

Sutton Coldfield will remain a Community Fire Station, still holding regular open days and hosting community groups who may wish to use the station's facilities. Sutton's crews will also undertake important fire safety inspections within the Sutton Coldfield area, as well as more targeted prevention work, in areas such as water safety.

Those prevention activities they are unable to undertake will be delivered by crews from elsewhere in the service, ensuring that the people of Sutton Coldfield still benefit from WMFS's up-stream approach to preventing fires. Experience from other TRU stations shows that this can be managed effectively.

## 4 Key performance information for Birmingham

### 4.1 For Quarter Two 2021/22, ending 30 September 2021.

4.1.1 Information is collated from WMFS incident data collected via a digital workbook; the one exception is the Killed or Seriously Injured in Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) which is provided by West Midlands Police.

PREVENTION AND PROTECTION							
Performance Indicator	Actual	Target	3yr avg	Last Year	Performance against target		Difference against Target
Accidental Dwelling Fires	341	373	373.0	383	-8.6%	●	-32
Accidental Non-Domestic Fires	78	91	89.0	63	-14.3%	●	-13
Deaths in Accidental Dwelling Fires			1.0	2	N/A		
Deliberate Derelict Building Fires	14	18	18.0	12	-22.2%	◆	-4
Deliberate Dwelling Fires	47	52	51.7	55	-9.6%	●	-5
Deliberate Non-Domestic Fires	24	36	35.7	40	-33.3%	◆	-12
Deliberate Rubbish Fires	229	291	291.0	228	-21.3%	◆	-62
Deliberate Vehicle Fires	104	148	148.0	126	-29.7%	◆	-44
False Alarms (Equipment)	1,254	1,392	1,392.0	1342	-9.9%	●	-138
Injuries in Accidental Dwelling Fires	7	12	11.7	7	-41.7%	◆	-5
Killed or Seriously Injured in RTCs	29	208	216.3	177	-86.1%	◆	-179

RESPONSE					
Risk Category	Avg attendance time	Target	% in target	% in target (High Risk areas)	Avg att time 2nd app
Cat 1 (High Risk)	04:33	05:00	61.8%	67.5%	06:22
Cat 2 (Medium Risk)	05:09	07:00	77.7%	84.6%	07:21
Cat 3 (Low Risk)	04:51	10:00	93.9%	96.3%	06:54
Cat 4 (Secondary Fires that attract a 20 minute-response time)	06:47	20:00	98.5%	98.8%	
Cat 5 (False Alarms)	05:25				

Key:	
Blue	Over performance against the tolerance levels
Green	Performance is within the tolerance levels
Red	Under performance against the tolerance levels

## 5 A snapshot of WMFS activity:

- 5.1 Fire Control handled a total of **25,876 calls in quarters 1 and 2**, in an average of **75 seconds per call**.
- 5.2 The Service attended **14,272 incidents** in total across the West Midlands and they arrived at the most serious in an average of just **4 minutes 41 seconds**.
- 5.3 A total of **37 large-scale training exercises** have been held across the Service to date – that's more than one a week!
- 5.4 **19,325 Safe & Well visits (8587 in Birmingham)** have been carried out to date, of which **41.7% (37.4% in Birmingham)** originated from **partner referrals**.
- 5.5 **4980 Safe & Strong visits (2184 in Birmingham)** have been carried out to date.

## 6 Further information

- 6.1 For the most up to date themes and subject areas issued by the West Midlands Fire Service, please visit either our website at: <https://www.wmfs.net/> or via our [Twitter](#) account or [Facebook](#) page.