



**MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 3 July 2013 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00am.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors P Harris, M Simon, A Tate (Chair), J Weatherill, N Wright and S Wright. Independent Member: Mr W Ravenscroft

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Lisa Randall, representative from RSM Tenon

**PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC**

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE 2013/14**

Members were asked to note the Chair and membership of the Committee for 2013/14, as agreed by the Fire Authority at its annual general meeting on 12 June 2013 and listed below:

Councillors:	Independent Member:
A Tate – Chair	Mr W Ravenscroft
D Flude	
P Harris	
M Simon	
J Weatherill	
N Wright	
S Wright	

The Chair welcomed Councillor S Wright as a newly appointed member to this Committee.

**B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor D Flude.

**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 10 April 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.**

MATTERS ARISING: Item 6-Equality and Diversity Update

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications provided Members with an update on the 'Managing Banter Conference' detailed in the minutes under this agenda item, to which Members were invited. He informed Members that the speakers presenting at the conference were well received and Members commented they looked forward to seeing the feedback from the conference.

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

**RESOLVED: That**

**the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee held on Wednesday 19 June 2013 be received, for information.**

**ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION**

**2 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2012-13**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications introduced this report which provided Members with an end of year account of organisational performance against the 2012-13 Service plans.

The Head of Finance drew Members attention to the first of the appendices provided within the report which showed the Authority's outturn position and revised revenue budget by service area, with the variance being an underspend of £274k. He informed Members that this information had been presented to the Closure of Accounts Committee as part of the draft Statement of Accounts 2012-13, at the meeting held on 19 June 2013. He explained that the underspend in Service Delivery had continued as posts were left vacant as the Service prepared to achieve the savings which had been included in the 2013-14 budget. He summarised the underspend in other service areas including reduced spending on corporate training, lower than anticipated spend on vehicle maintenance and a slight underspend on business rates (as a result of a business rates review) and utilities.

The Head of Finance referred to appendix 2 of the report which detailed the outturn from the capital programme approved by Members in February 2012. He explained that the main changes were the removal of the schemes relating to the day crewing plus staffing system at Macclesfield and the additional funding approved for the Runcorn Healthy Hearts Gym.

Members queried the reduction in spending on training and what the impact on operational training was. The Head of Finance responded that the reported underspend related solely to corporate training and not operational training.

A Member also queried why the capital expenditure for joint training at Manchester airport had not been included within the capital programme outturn report and requested more information on the benefit of this scheme.

The Head of Finance confirmed that he would include additional information regarding capital expenditure within future reporting. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer added that training facilities in the east of the county had been sought for a number of reasons including issues with the surrounding neighbourhood when the smoke house was used for training at Headquarters. He also advised that the training facility at Manchester airport was a joint venture with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and the airport, allowing the costs to be shared whilst providing a fit for purpose training facility for operational crew.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications continued by presenting those parts of the report relating to Service's performance including the position at year-end against targets set at the start of the year for the organisation's KPIs. These were detailed in the accompanying Corporate Performance Scorecard attached as appendix 3 of the report.

He summarised the headline performance which included the continued downward trend of the number of fires attended which was partly due to the reduction in attendance at dwelling and deliberate primary fires. He confirmed the highest reduction was seen in the attendance at deliberate secondary fires which had seen a reduction nationally during this particularly wet year as the weather continued to be an influence and showed a clear correlation. He concluded that this provided a significant challenge when setting future targets and the continued work on reducing this target would be supported by the Service's targeted intervention work resulting from the monitoring and analysis of arson in Cheshire.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications advised Members that there had been four fire deaths during the year and he brought their attention to the number of fire-related injuries recorded. These were slightly lower than previous years with over two thirds of injuries occurring in accidental dwelling fires. He added that the planned prevention and protection activities had been successful overall with the exception being the take up of Contact Assessments for older people which hadn't been as good as hoped. He confirmed there would be a focus for crews and advocates to improve in this area. He explained that progress was being made on two major long standing campaigns which were in relation to making it compulsory for landlords to ensure smoke alarms are fitted in residential properties and for all new-build homes to have sprinkler systems installed.

Members queried whether the Service contacted members of the public automatically when they reached the age of 65 to offer a home safety assessment (HSA). The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service targeted the top 20,000 following a methodology to identify the most vulnerable older people and the Service would target these individuals to carry out a HSA and Contact Assessment, with a referral made to Age UK Cheshire to engage and offer advice on additional benefits available. Members expressed concern on the number of over 65's in Cheshire not targeted and not offered the benefit of a Contact Assessment and queried whether the Service had any direct liaison with benefits agencies. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that Age UK Cheshire liaised directly with the agencies providing benefits. He confirmed the Service had requested a detailed performance report from Age UK Cheshire be presented to the next meeting of this Committee as the Service

tried to improve the performance information available for Members of this Committee to scrutinise. Members confirmed that it was important that this data was reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

A Member queried whether it would be possible to include some comparable performance data from other similar fire services to provide some benchmarking in future reporting. The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed he would look into this.

RESOLVED: **That**

**[1] the End of Year Financial and Performance Review 2012-13 be noted**

### **3 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2012-13 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications introduced Lisa Randall, who was in attendance at the meeting as the representative from RSM Tenon, the Authority's appointed internal auditors. He advised Members that the report provided progress at year end against the 2012-13 Internal Audit plan which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Internal Auditor advised Members that this report included a summary of the eleven planned audits for 2012-13 and that all had resulted in a positive opinion. She drew Members attention to the 'Internal Audit Opinion 2012/13' detailed within the appendix where the Internal Auditor stated that it was satisfied with the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements. She advised there had been a small number of recommendations that had been accepted by the Service's senior management and reasonable progress in implementing them had been made.

Members queried the opinion of 'adequate' and asked what other standards could be achieved. The internal auditor responded there were only two levels of opinion given which were 'not adequate' and 'adequate' and achieving this opinion was the highest standard available.

RESOLVED: **That**

**[1] the Internal Audit Plan 2012-13 Year End Progress Report be noted.**

### **4 HOME SAFETY ASSESSMENT (HSA) TARGETING AND PERFORMANCE 2012/13**

Station Manager, Ian Pugh presented this report to Members which provided an overview of the Service's HSA targeting methodology and performance for 2012/13. He explained that, prior to 2011/12, HSA delivery was targeted by risk scoring ward areas that could include high risk people and low risk people living within these wards. He continued that in 2011/12 the targeting methodology for HSA's was revised to target individuals most at risk from fire. The annual performance requirements were changed from 60,000 to a minimum of 20,000 HSA's per annum.

The Station Manager explained that the methodology used data from 180,000 people over the age of 65 and these were risk assessed taking into account areas such as personal risk, lone person risk and response risk. This identified the top 20,000 individuals most at risk from fire which were referred to as Gold households and would be targeted for a HSA. He advised Members that the service had engaged with the 20,000 Gold addresses as targeted but the number of HSAs completed was lower than this due to refusals or being unable to contact the occupant. The Service also received risk based partner agency referrals which were treated as high priority for a HSA visit and the number of referrals had continued to increase each year since 2009/10.

The Station Manager summarised the Service's solutions to address the challenges faced in managing those vulnerable households with exceptionally high risk from fire with their partnership agencies. He provided Members with a presentation which included examples of case studies of two vulnerable households and the measures taken by the Service together with partner agencies to reduce the risk to those individuals.

Members welcomed the presentation which explained the methodology and provided increased awareness of the challenges faced by the Service. They queried whether awareness training was provided for external agencies such as care workers and registered social landlords. The Station Manager confirmed letters and guidance documents were provided primarily to care agencies but opportunities to provide group awareness sessions were welcomed.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service carried out multi agency training and would be supportive of any opportunity to gain further introductions that Members may be able to offer.

Members queried the cost impact of the increased number of agency referrals that required HSA visits and the Station Manager responded that these were incorporated and delivered within existing resources. This was one of the challenges faced by the Service.

Members asked whether the top 20,000 included individuals under 65 who may have learning disabilities and be at high risk of fire. The Station Manager advised that these individuals would only be captured by referrals from partners or the Service's appointed dementia advocate.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the Home Safety Assessment (HSA) Targeting and Performance 2012/13 report and presentation be noted.**

## **5 ON CALL RECRUITMENT PROJECT**

The Head of Service Delivery introduced this report which provided an update on the progress made in respect of the project to recruit On Call firefighters (a key element of the Emergency Response Review programme reflected in IRMP 10). He confirmed it had been identified that the Service needed to optimise the use of the On Call Duty System and embark on a series of recruitment

campaigns across the next three years to increase the number of On Call fire fighters across the Service.

The Head of Service Delivery described the need to review the recruitment model for On Call staff due to the size and scope of the project for recruiting through a comprehensive external recruitment campaign. He summarised the recruitment campaign for Runcorn which had now concluded. The selection process was now underway with 28 people being invited to undertake the written and practical tests. This number reduced to 13 being invited for a medical which was the final stage of the process. He added that a similar campaign had now been launched at Macclesfield with 17 people being invited to undertake the tests.

The Head of Service Delivery highlighted the financial implications which included increased advertising and training costs which would be factored into the budget.

He drew Members attention to the timetable spanning four years which was detailed within the report and included planned new stations at Alsager and Penketh.

Members queried the process for reducing the numbers of people from the individuals registering an interest down to the number being invited to the final stage. The Head of Service Delivery explained that individuals would not be invited to the next stage of the application process if they failed to meet a certain level at each stage. Standards needed to be maintained.

RESOLVED: **That**

**[1] the On Call Recruitment Project report be noted**

## **6 PRESENTATION ON INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013-14 (IRMP 10) – PROJECTS PROGRESS**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications provided Members with the summary of the progress made with regard to the IRMP10 proposals (supplementing information provided in the previous item). He advised Members that the reintroduction of a blanket 10 minute response standard had commenced. It was being monitored against a target of 80% and the Service was currently performing at 84%. He continued that progress was being made with the task analysis and validation carried out by the senior management team in relation to riding with four firefighters on an appliance.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications informed Members that the three year planned value for money reviews for all departments within support areas was now in its third year and substantial savings were being realised. He advised Members that a report would be brought to a future meeting of this Committee providing them with an overview of the outcomes of these reviews.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications advised Members that the IRMP proposals were being internally managed by a number of project boards which all reported to IRMP Programme Board.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer summarised the recent developments related to sharing premises with other services. He informed Members that, initially, Poynton fire station had been identified as a site for use as a joint provision and this had been used as a pilot to understand the legal and financial elements required for sharing the Service's premises. He explained that Poynton fire station was to have an extension built to provide the Police with separate interviewing facilities but made it clear that the rest of the premises were shared between the Service and Police. The Ambulance Service also had a rapid response vehicle at these premises. He summarised that other Service sites were being considered for sharing with the other emergency services.

Members queried the signage for these premises. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that it was important to retain the identity of the sites so that they were still recognised as a fire station especially at on-call stations where there wasn't a permanent presence.

RESOLVED: **That**

**[1] the verbal update on IRMP10 projects progress be noted;**

## **7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Monitoring Officer advised that Members had suggested when discussing the end of year financial and performance report that a paper on income generation would be useful at a future meeting.

The Monitoring Officer also confirmed that a possible agenda item 'Mersey Crossing New Bridge – implications for the Service' had been discussed earlier in the meeting and would be added to the forward work programme.

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