



MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 4 February 2015 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00am.

PRESENT: Councillors D Flude, P Harris, M Simon, A Tate (Chair), J Weatherill and N Wright. Independent Member: Mr M McBride

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Ken Clemens, CEO, Age UK Cheshire

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A RECORDING OF MEETING

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Wright.

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 3 December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

E MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That

the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee held on Wednesday 28 January 2015 be received, for information.

MATTERS ARISING

Item 2: Draft Budget, Council Tax and Medium Term Financial Plan

A Member queried the Policy Committee minutes where reference was made that Halton Borough Council were not included in the arrangement for funding PCSOs. The Head of Finance confirmed that the Service provided some

funding to the other 3 constituent authorities in Cheshire for PCSOs but not to Halton.

Members also queried how the secondment from the Police to the fire service was funded as they felt this was very a positive arrangement. The Head of Finance confirmed that the Service paid a fee to the Police for the secondment.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION

2 AGE UK PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE

The Chair welcomed Mr Ken Clemens, CEO, Age UK Cheshire to the meeting. She asked whether it would be possible for Mr Clemens to provide a deputy at future meetings if he was unable to attend. Mr Clemens confirmed that, if at all possible, he would try and arrange this wherever resources allowed.

Mr Clemens introduced this report to Members which provided an update on the local performance in relation to Age UK Cheshire's partnership with the Service. He advised Members that the partnership was progressing well as detailed within the report and current response times for referrals received from the Service had been maintained at 3 working days by Age UK Cheshire. He confirmed this compared well with other face to face advice received locally by residents for similar services. He informed Members that the partnership between the Service and Age UK Cheshire had received wider attention from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and Lancashire's health and care system. He confirmed that work was now underway across Lancashire to redesign early intervention based on Cheshire's approach.

Mr Clemens advised Members that, through Springboard and working with CFOA, the Cheshire partnership had been involved with the government helping it to secure evidence for a forthcoming White Paper on data sharing. The potential was for all fire and rescue services and health services to learn from the good practices underway in Cheshire in prevention and reduction of risk in the population of over 65s by early intervention.

Members thanked Mr Clemens for the report which they found very useful and asked him to explain further about the dementia adviser service detailed within the report. Mr Clemens informed Members that Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester had very high numbers of people living with dementia compared to other areas within the North West. He confirmed that the Service part funded a dementia advisor post within Cheshire West and Chester and that feedback received on the service the advisors provided was very positive as they provided practical advice and help for people living with dementia in their own homes.

Members welcomed the forthcoming White Paper on data sharing and Mr Clemens confirmed this would hopefully help to change the culture for the sharing of data in turn this would assist in the delivery of a more targeted approach to prevention work with an ageing population being helped to remain in their homes.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Age UK Partnership Performance report be noted.

3 2014 BONFIRE REPORT

The Arson Reduction Manager introduced this annual report to Members which summarised the preventative and operational activities of the Service and its partners during the bonfire period 17th October 2014 to 7th November 2014 inclusive. He advised Members that the report summarised activities carried out and provided data on the number of small deliberate fires recorded for this period compared to previous years and also the areas where they occurred.

The Arson Reduction Manager explained that a targeted approach to education had taken place since 2011 and had continued to evolve each year and was delivered by operational staff in partnership with Cheshire Police. He highlighted some of the other activities which had taken place which included bonfire removal schemes and general waste management as well as part-funded and supported local organised displays in some areas of Cheshire. He informed Members that extensive planning had taken place with North West Fire Control, as each Service had previously had their method for dealing with activities in this period. The aim was to adopt a common practice, where possible, for dealing with unlit bonfires, firework incidents, filtering and call challenging and mobilising procedures.

The Arson Reduction Manager explained that the industrial action had impacted availability and deployment of the 'midi' fire engines and had also resulted in a reduction in the number of front line appliances available. However, the 'Take Extra Care' publicity campaign carried out locally and nationally in the media during periods of industrial action had likely attributed to the reduced activity in 2014 for this period. He drew Members' attention to the graph within the report which showed a continued downward trend in secondary deliberate fire over the last five years, with 87 incidents recorded in 2014.

The Arson Reduction Manager concluded by referring Members to the recommendations detailed in the Bonfire Period Report 2014 for their consideration.

A Member confirmed he supported the recommendations detailed within the report and suggested that they could be raised at the local Unitary Performance Group meetings that Members regularly attended.

A Member noted the continued high number of incidents in Cheshire West and Chester compared to the other unitary areas reported. The Arson Reduction Manager explained that the 5 stations with the highest activity were the same each year and included Ellesmere Port and Winsford. However he highlighted that Winsford had been successful in reducing the number of incidents in 2014 compared to the same period last year.

Members discussed whether the Service gave safety advice to local communities who hold a bonfire in their local area e.g. on an allotment. The

Arson Reduction Manager advised that the Service wrote to all the known display organisers with safety advice but that a general guidance note was not issued.

Members referred to the hostility shown to the Service's 'On the Streets' team in an area of Cheshire West and Chester and asked what had been done to address this. The Arson Reduction Manager explained that due to a miscommunication, which has since been addressed, the community had believed that the 'On the Streets' team worked directly with the Police which was not the case. Due to the verbal abuse received by the team it had been decided to withdraw the team from this particular area.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the 2014 Bonfire Report be noted; and

[2] the recommendations in the Bonfire Report be supported.

4 OVERVIEW OF CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S WORK TO REDUCE FIRES IN RECYCLING AND WASTE SITES

The Policy and Development Manager introduced this report which provided details of the continued work being undertaken by the Service to reduce the number of fires in waste and recycling sites. He explained that guidance had been issued by the Environment Agency (EA) and published in association with CFOA's Waste Site Working Group in response to a number of high profile fires in the waste industry over the past few years. He drew Members' attention to the Appendix attached to the report which provided details of fires at Cheshire waste and recycling sites since April 2008 and also included information such as the number of appliances attending the incident and the duration of the incident. He explained that these fires created concern locally due to the scale of the fires and the types of waste involved which could be varied and hazardous.

The Policy and Development Manager informed Members that the EA guidance clarified measures that recycling and waste sites must undertake to minimise risk and it also promoted fire prevention measures for operators of waste sites. He advised Members that the EA guidance only applied to larger sites of which there were around 20 in Cheshire. He summarised some of the prevention work being undertaken by the Service and described the training on the EA guidance being delivered to all wholtime fire crews to raise awareness of the fire risk to enable the crews to prepare appropriate Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) for these sites. He confirmed that the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Service, the EA and local authorities was also being considered to create a partnership approach to planning, licensing and inspection of waste transfer and recycling sites.

Members queried why the guidance did not apply to farms which also stored hazardous materials. The Policy and Development Manager confirmed that farms were inspected as a work place and were covered by the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order if any risk was identified by prevention officers.

Members asked if more information could be provided on the number of farm fires that had taken place in Cheshire.

A member referred to the details of the fires at Cheshire waste and recycling sites provided in the report and noted that there had been re-occurrences at some sites and queried whether the Service carried out regular fire safety checks at these sites. The Policy and Development Manager confirmed that the Service visited the sites on an annual basis following a fire and advised Members that some recycling sites had been prosecuted by the Service in partnership with the EA where safety measures were lacking.

Members asked whether the Service was able to recover any costs from the recycling companies as some of the larger fires had been very resource intensive. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that reserves were held by the Service to cover the cost of large incidents such as these, should they occur. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also explained that the law did not allow for the recovery of the costs of dealing with fires.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the progress to reduce fires and recycling and waste sites across the Service Area be noted.

5 HALTON WHEELIE BIN INITIATIVE

The Arson Reduction Manager advised Members that this report provided information relating to the contribution wheelie bin fires made to both the Small Deliberate Fire and Deliberate Fire categories. The report also outlined the positive outcomes from the pilot initiative in Halton in the reduction of wheelie bin fires, as previously discussed at this Committee.

The Arson Reduction Manager explained that Halton was an area that had consistently shown higher levels of wheelie bin fires, often in the same locations, and for this reason it was decided that the Service would approach Halton to pilot the Service's proposed scheme. The proposal was for the profile of wheelie bin fires to be raised in partnership with Halton Borough Council (HBC) in an effort to increase the appreciation of the size of the problem and the total cost of incidents to the authority, over and above the cost of the replacement of the bin. He explained that HBC were also focussed on an enforcement strategy which involved its residents abiding to a code of practice regarding domestic waste disposal and the storage of wheelie bins. He confirmed that a number of Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued by HBC. He informed Members that the enforcement work and other good work being carried out locally by the Station Managers in Halton had resulted in a reduction in the number of wheelie bin fires.

He advised Members that although the proposed exercise to establish the true cost of a wheelie bin fire had not yet been completed it was hoped that this would help illustrate the seriousness of these fires.

A Halton Member highlighted that the policy for charging for a replacement wheelie bin, introduced in Halton, could be challenging in some cases where the owner was not at fault. The Arson Reduction Manager commented that since the charging policy had been introduced the impact in reducing incidents had been notable.

Members discussed other approaches and deterrents including advising residents of timing limitations for putting bins in and out (on the day of emptying) and confirmed that they may need to consider the work undertaken by HBC further within their own constituent areas.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Halton Wheelie Bin Initiative report be noted; and**
- [2] the recommendations in paragraphs 14–16 of the report be supported.**

6 STAFF SATISFACTION SURVEY – VERBAL UPDATE

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications advised Members that the Service had had a consistent approach to carrying out regular staff satisfaction surveys every two years since 2007. He explained that a survey had initially been scheduled for 2013 but had been postponed due to the onset of industrial action as it was recognised that the issues being addressed at a national level would ultimately have an impact locally. It had not been anticipated that the industrial action would continue for such a prolonged period and therefore, he informed Members that officers had decided that the next staff satisfaction survey would now take place in June/July 2015.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications advised Members that a number of staff roadshows had been planned for April and May for staff to receive an update on the Integrated Risk Management Plan and provide them with an opportunity to raise any issues. He explained that following the survey in June/July a report would be presented to this Committee to review any issues identified and develop an action plan for regular monitoring by the Committee.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed that the Service recognised it would be difficult to maintain the percentages of satisfaction achieved in previous surveys due to ongoing issues at a national level relating to pensions.

Members asked which meeting of the Committee the results of the staff satisfaction survey be reported to and the Head of Planning, Performance and Communications confirmed a full report would be prepared for the November meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the verbal update on the Staff Satisfaction Survey be noted.**

7 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014 – 15 (IRMP11) – PROJECTS PROGRESS

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications provided Members with a verbal update on progress in respect of the delivery of projects identified in the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (IRMP11). He advised Members that planning permission on all sites detailed in the Emergency Response Programme had now been received and that work was well underway at the Alsager site. He confirmed that tenders for the contract for the construction of the remaining sites had been received and were currently in the process of being evaluated.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications summarised progress on other IRMP projects. He advised that the Service was awaiting the outcome of the Government's deliberations about the introduction of legislation as a result of the Cheshire-led smoke alarm campaign. However, it was noted that it was a very busy time for the Government with the forthcoming elections and this may cause a delay in any announcement on the new legislation.

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications concluded by informing Members that the first programme of value for money reviews had now reached its conclusion and a report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee which detailed the costs, benefits and lessons learned. He explained that this information would be analysed by officers in readiness for the next programme of value for money reviews that were currently being planned to continue to achieve further savings.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the verbal update on Integrated Risk Management Plan 2014-15 (IRMP11) progress be noted.**

8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that, as mentioned earlier, the results of the staff satisfaction survey would be added to the November agenda on the Forward Work programme. He advised that no further items had been identified during the meeting and asked Members if they wished to raise any other items for consideration.

A Member commented that it would be useful to receive a report in relation to the Service's sharing of sites with other emergency services both existing arrangements and future plans. Members agreed to add this to the Forward Work Programme at its August meeting.