



**MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00am.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D Bailey, P Harris (Chair), D Mahon, J Mercer, M Simon and N Wright. Independent Member: Mr M McBride

**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 L Morgan.

**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 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION**

**2 UPDATE ON NEW AUTHORITY RISK PROTECTION AND INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Head of Finance introduced this report which provided Members with information in relation to the new arrangements for providing risk protection to the Authority which had been in place since November 2015.

The Head of Finance provided Members with some background to the report. He explained that until October 2015, the Authority procured insurance as a member of the Fire and Rescue Insurance Consortium (FRIC: a group of nine Fire Authorities across the UK) through joint tendering. He advised that following more recent tendering exercises in the last few years it had been identified that it was unlikely that any further savings in procurement of insurance would be possible. As a consequence, FRIC had sought potential alternatives which had resulted in a hybrid discretionary mutual model being

considered the best solution. He reminded Members that they had approved involvement in the new arrangement at the Fire Authority meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and had authorised the Head of Finance to take the necessary steps to achieve it.

The Head of Finance advised that the new arrangements had come into force in November 2015 and the new model was operated through a Company jointly owned by the nine authorities in FRIC. He explained that the nine authorities jointly paid contributions to the Company which were used for three purposes:

- i) To pay Member authorities or third parties up to an agreed limit when the five directors of the Company had considered claims and agreed to payments being made;
- ii) To take out relevant insurance policies on behalf of the Company; and
- iii) To employ a management company to carry out the Company's business activities.

The Head of Finance confirmed that the Company had successfully procured the services of a management company, Regis Mutual Management Limited and that the new system was working well to date with claims being processed efficiently.

A Member queried the level of claims which would be met by the Company and at what level they would be met by arranged excess policies. The Head of Finance confirmed the various levels which had been agreed for the different types of claims.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the update on new Authority Risk Protection Arrangements be noted.**

**3 ON-CALL AVAILABILITY**

The Head of Service Delivery introduced this report which provided Members with further information in relation to on-call availability. He explained that the report included performance data from all on-call fire appliances, which was attached as an Appendix to the report, and also provided a brief explanation of the key issues which had affected performance and summarised the actions taken by the Service to improve on-call availability.

The Head of Service Delivery reminded Members that half of the Service's operational capability was provided by on-call teams. He explained that the performance target for on-call availability was set at 85% and that last year the average availability across all on-call stations was 70%. However, he noted that the on-call teams had provided excellent service and outstanding value for money. He advised Members that the Service continued to address the ongoing challenges that had hindered achievement of the 85% on-call availability target which included recruitment, retention, daytime cover and the provision of adequate numbers of competent firefighters and supervisory managers.

He provided Members with a summary of each of the areas which the Service was addressing which included:

- Investment in recruitment to address the significant number of vacancies across all the on-call stations, with the improvement of recruitment processes and innovative approaches to campaigns to target candidates.
- Current high numbers of development firefighters working towards competence who until fully trained were unable to be made available to crew an on-call appliance. However training continued to be improved and training appliances shadowed at incidents to enable on-call firefighters to gain experience and competence whilst training.
- The retention of on-call firefighters by reviewing pay and rewards and job satisfaction in responding to incidents, with the intention of making the role more rewarding.
- Various options being considered to meet the shortfall of around 18% in the number of Supervisory Managers who managed the on-call teams and commanded operational incidents.
- Issues with daytime cover as most on-call firefighters work outside the five minute catchment for their station and subsequently are unable to provide cover during the daytime when at their place of work. He explained that the Service had considered approaching businesses in close proximity to on-call stations in the hope of gaining their agreement to allowing employees to be made available for on-call duties whilst at their place of work.

Members discussed the on-call availability performance data for the stations and queried why certain on-call stations such as Nantwich were able to achieve 90% availability when they were currently understaffed. The Head of Service Delivery explained that the number of drivers, supervisory managers and competent firefighters at Nantwich were all on target which meant the appliances were fully crewed and available. He added that, at this station, the numbers of hours of availability offered by staff was considerably higher than average.

Members queried whether recruitment of women at schools could be targeted to address the issues with daytime cover as there was potential that they would be available within school hours. The Head of Service Delivery confirmed that campaigns had been targeted at schools on occasion but had not proved to be successful. Members agreed that targeting schools especially with after school facilities would be a potentially good area to campaign for the recruitment of on-call female firefighters.

Members welcomed the report and discussed the challenges faced by the Service and felt that due to the increased reliance on on-call resources that further effort was required to address all of the issues highlighted. Members suggested it would be appropriate to receive a further report in six months time to establish whether actions taken in the meantime had impacted upon availability.

The Chair asked the Head of Service Delivery to make the operational staff aware that on-call availability was being monitored by Members.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the content of the On-Call Availability report be noted; and**
- [2] a further report be presented to the Committee at its meeting in November 2016.**

#### **4 SPRINKLER PROJECT UPDATE**

The Protection, Policy and Partnerships Manager was in attendance at the meeting and delivered a presentation to Members on the latest position in relation to the high rise sprinkler project. He provided Members with some background to the sprinkler project which had commenced in 2013 following approval of a £160k budget by the Fire Authority, for officers to promote the fitting of sprinklers in high rise buildings across the Service area. The budget was apportioned equally between the four unitary areas and officers were assigned to act as a go-between with housing associations and sprinkler companies with the offer of financial assistance from the budget.

The Protection, Policy and Partnerships Manager summarised the work carried out by officers in each of the unitary areas which included:

- Cheshire West and Chester: two high rise buildings were identified and progress was made with 17 flats out of 60 installed with sprinklers in one of the buildings. The second high rise building installed a show flat to promote the idea to residents but came across opposition to the idea. Unfortunately a leak from the sprinkler system resulted in a number of residents being re-housed and no further progress was made.
- Halton and Warrington: no agreement reached in these areas due to the cost of the systems and that there was no legal requirement for sprinklers to be fitted.
- Cheshire East: recently engaged with housing association in this area who were reporting to their Board for discussion.

The Protection, Policy and Partnerships Manager explained that the initial costs provided by sprinkler companies were unrealistic and the costs of installing the sprinkler systems in high rise buildings had been considerably higher than originally estimated. He explained that £108k of the projects approved original budget was still unallocated and that the Members Sprinkler Group would be meeting to discuss the next steps for the project. He concluded by asking Members to consider the possibility of using the approved budget in targeting other vulnerable areas of the community such as care homes, vulnerable families, women's refuges and single elderly individuals living alone in premises.

Members queried whether the Service approached companies that build sheltered housing for elderly individuals to promote the fitting of sprinklers. The Protection, Policy and Protection Manager explained that the Service met with building companies at the planning stage and also fed into building regulations

to promote the fitting of sprinklers but due to the additional cost and the fact that they were not a legal requirement sprinklers were not installed.

Members noted the report and the possibility of other options being explored when offering assistance towards funding of sprinklers. The Chair confirmed that Members of the Sprinkler Group, which was chaired by Councillor Rudd, would be meeting to discuss the next steps for this project prior to reporting their recommendations to the Fire Authority and suggested that Members could feedback any comments to the Group prior to their meeting taking place.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the content of the Sprinkler Project Update be noted.**

**5 SAFE AND WELL PROJECT UPDATE**

The Prevention, Policy and Projects Manager introduced the presentation which provided an update on the current progress that had been made by the Service in developing Safe and Well visits (previously home safety assessments – HSAs) to support identified health issues. He provided Members with some background which included national and local performance statistics in relation to the success of HSAs conducted by fire authorities which had resulted in a steady downward trend in fire deaths and an increased numbers of smoke alarms being installed in homes. He advised that in more recent years the Service had targeted its HSAs to people over 65 and research had shown that good progress had been made with this approach. He explained that the success of fire authorities in this area had come to the attention of the Chief Executive of the NHS who suggested that the NHS could ‘piggyback’ on the fire authorities fire safety visits to support health issues and it was a good opportunity for joint working across the emergency services.

The Prevention, Policy and Projects Manager confirmed that a number of national, regional and local discussions had taken place to agree the type of health intervention which could take place as part of the Safe and Well visits for people over 65. He highlighted the issues identified for incorporation into Safe and Well visits which were; slips, trips and falls; supporting hospital discharge for over 65s following a fall; support of bowel cancer screening; support for smoking cessation and alcohol reduction; and hypertension and blood pressure checks. He continued by providing Members with a summary as to how the Safe and Well visit would be re-launched, which included the Service’s trained firefighters and advocates carrying out basic health checks to address the five issues identified. He explained that any health issues identified would not be referred to health partners by the Service without the agreement of the householder.

He concluded by providing Members with details of the project’s implementation plan to launch the Safe and Well visits. He explained that training of relevant staff was currently taking place and the first phase was planned to be introduced in September 2016 which included slips, trips and falls, bowel cancer screening and smoking cessation and alcohol reduction. The second phase was planned for introduction in January 2017 and included hospital discharge for over 65 admitted following a fall and hypertension and blood pressure

checks. He confirmed that evaluation of the success of the Safe and Well Visits was important to enable the Service to understand the impact of the changes introduced.

A Member commented that some members of the community may be apprehensive about fire service staff offering health services and may not wish to answer questions or be referred to other health agencies. In particular, he highlighted the blood pressure tests and that CFRS staff interpreting the findings of the tests could lead to unnecessary referrals on occasion. The Prevention, Policy and Projects Manager confirmed that the programme of training of staff was extremely important and certain aspects were being carried out by health partners. He advised that the blood pressure test was in Phase 2 of the launch as the approach needed to be considered carefully by health partners who were aware of the potential impact on GPs and their capacity to deal with any potential increase in referrals.

Members noted the report and suggested it would be useful to receive regular reports on this project and that it would be beneficial to invite health partners to a future meeting when the report was discussed.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the content of the Safe and Well Project Update presentation be noted; and**
- [2] a further update report be presented to the Committee at its meeting in March 2017.**

**6 CARDIAC RESPONSE PILOT PROJECT UPDATE**

The Operational Policy and Assurance, Group Manager provided a verbal update to Members in respect of the progress of the Cardiac Response Pilot project. He explained that the project had been initiated following meetings between the Service and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to discuss ways in which the Service could assist colleagues in the ambulance service to improve response times to cardiac arrests as survival rates across the UK were as low as 5%.

He explained that comparison data had shown that in Seattle where firefighters and paramedics respond simultaneously that survival rates had been significantly higher and this had been the biggest driver for the Cheshire pilot scheme. The reasons for this included the need for CPR to be started immediately following a cardiac arrest and continued until professional help arrived. He advised that response times to these incidents were categorised by the ambulance service as highest priority with a maximum standard response time of 8 minutes which NWAS accepted it struggled to meet on all occasions. He advised that the pilot would see highly trained and professionally equipped firefighters attending cardiac arrest incidents to deliver CPR and shock treatment with the use of AEDs which would be carried on all fire appliances. He confirmed the four stations taking part in the initial pilot, which was due to go live shortly, were Warrington, Crewe, Frodsham and Holmes Chapel where it

had been identified that CFRS could potentially arrive around 6 minutes quicker than the maximum response standard set by the ambulance service.

The Operational Policy and Assurance, Group Manager summarised by advising Members that bespoke training was being delivered to the relevant fire personnel and additionally Station and Watch Champions were being trained to recognise symptoms of stress and distress which enabled them to support colleagues in situations when an incident attended was emotionally difficult. He advised that a further report would be produced towards the end of 2016 to evaluate the pilot scheme and assess whether to roll out the scheme across the remainder of the Service's stations.

The Chair gave his apologies and left the meeting and the Deputy Chair took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

A Member welcomed the introduction of the pilot scheme and noted that the additional training for firefighters was positive and noted the additional skills could be used within other initiatives in the community going forward. A Member queried whether the additional duties were voluntary for the firefighters on the pilot stations and the Group Manager confirmed that it was voluntary but that all personnel had agreed to take part in the pilot and had been very positive in embracing the change.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the verbal update on the Cardiac Response Pilot Project be noted.**

## **7 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015–16 (IRMP12) – UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH PROJECTS**

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications informed Members that the end of year performance and financial report would be presented to Members at the next meeting of the Fire Authority in June but that he was able to provide some headline performance figures at this time. He advised Members that there had been six fire deaths in the Service's area for the performance period and that overall the number of incidents attended had risen slightly in comparison to last year. However, he added that the number of fires reported and attendance at false alarms had been reduced which was positive, and that the additional special service calls the fire service now attended, such as forced entries had increased attendance figures. He confirmed that Members would be provided with a breakdown of the types of incident attended to enable the monitoring of future performance.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the verbal update on Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-16 (IRMP12) progress be noted.**

## **8 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal and Democratic Service advised Members that he had noted the following agenda items which were to be added to the Committee's forward work programme:

- On-Call Availability Update - November 2016 meeting
- Safe and Well Project Update - March 2017 meeting
- Cardiac Response Pilot Update at a future meeting to be decided.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred Members to the Forward Work programme report and advised that agenda item 'Overview of Capital Work Programme for ERP' which had been identified at a previous meeting of the Committee would be presented to Members at its next meeting in August. No further items were identified.