



**MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 6 February 2013 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00am.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors, D Flude, M Simon, A Tate (Chair) and J Weatherill.  
Independent Member: Mr W Ravenscroft

**PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC**

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors P Carey, P Harris and N Wright.

**B DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Members interests.

**C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: That**

**Version 2 of the minutes of the Meeting of the Performance and Overview Committee held on 5 December 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.**

**D MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED: That**

**the minutes of the Meeting of the Policy Committee held on 30 January 2013 be received, for information.**

**MATTERS ARISING**

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

Members requested further explanation regarding the weighting that had been applied to the Service's successful Capital Grant Bid which was referenced in Item 2 of the Policy Committee minutes.

The Head of Finance explained that the 'invest to save' element of the bid was what was being referred to and the Chief Fire Officer added that the bid was successful based upon the Service's plan for the next four years and that Central Government would require evidence of delivery.

## ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION

### 2 2012 BONFIRE REPORT

The Policy and Planning Manager, Community Fire Protection (CFP) introduced this report which summarised the preventative and operational activities undertaken by the Service and its partners during the bonfire period dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 2012 to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012. He informed Members that the report analysed and evaluated the effectiveness of the joint efforts of the Service and its partners so that resources could be deployed more effectively in future years.

He drew Members attention to the following points within the 2012 Bonfire Analysis Report:

- The total number of small deliberate fires was 189, the same as 2011, which was considered a successful outcome given the comparatively dry weather and that bonfire night fell adjacent to a weekend.
- The Service engaged with local partners and planned a variety of interventions and strategies. This included 'Skip Days' which encouraged the disposal of large waste items.
- The intervention work carried out in primary and secondary Schools
- The two reported attacks on fire-fighters this year, fortunately no injuries were sustained
- The social media and Service's facebook were used extensively to communicate safety messages and 2,570 visits were made to the Service's website bonfire page

He summarised the report which concluded with a number of recommendations for 2013, such as the reintroduction of the targeted youth activity in Winsford and the continued working with partner agencies for the removal of large waste items.

Members queried whether the Service carried out any checks on local premises that sold fireworks and also what legislation was in place for fireworks sold locally and on the Internet.

The Policy and Planning Manager explained that a licence was required to store and sell fireworks in premises and warehouses. He confirmed the Service did carry out checks on a number of premises such as supermarkets who stored large volumes of fireworks and information was shared with Trading Standards, who controlled the legislation with regard to fireworks. The Head of Community Fire Protection confirmed that companies selling fireworks on the Internet were required to use a licensed carrier for delivery, as Royal Mail did not provide this service.

Members asked what the financial impact of reintroducing the targeted youth activity in Winsford would be following the reduction in support from partner organisations in respect of staff and funding. He responded that this was being re-visited with the relevant partner organisations following this year's data reflecting the impact of the reduced focus which resulted in an increase in the Service's attendance at small deliberate fires in this area, compared to 2011.

Members congratulated the Service on the successful social media and facebook campaign which had targeted young people.

Members requested that the Committee be provided with results as soon after the end of the bonfire period as was achievable. The Planning and Policy Manager responded that an interim update could be provided at the December meeting of the Committee which included the reported statistics and then a full report could be provided at the February meeting, to which Members agreed.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the content of the 2012 Bonfire Analysis Report be noted;**
- [2] the recommendations detailed within the 2012 Bonfire Analysis Report be supported; and**
- [3] an interim report be provided to the Committee in December 2013 and the annual report be submitted in February 2013.**

### **3 SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS POLICY**

The Policy and Development Manager, CFP presented this report which provided Members with a summary of the performance following the introduction of the revised Unwanted Fire Signals Policy (UWFS) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. It also detailed the work completed by the Service to assist businesses in reducing the number of UWFS and discussed potential amendments to the policy which would deliver further reductions.

He summarised the first six months' performance which included a 20% reduction in attendance to automatic fire alarms and approximately 400 fewer appliances being mobilised as a result of the attendance being reduced to one pump.

He referred Members to the main features of the revised policy which had been introduced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012 and followed extensive consultation with both internal and external stakeholders.

He explained that significant monitoring had taken place and each call had been 'tagged' by control operators which enabled the effectiveness of the policy changes to be analysed.

He commented on potential future options for reduction which could be considered and which had been adopted by other Fire Services. These included non attendance at certain premises unless a 999 call was received. He advised Members that work was underway to look at a regional approach to UWFS reduction which was in the early stages.

He explained that a comprehensive review would take place after the policy had been implemented for a period of 12 months and future options could be considered as to whether the Service adopted a more robust approach.

Members discussed their concerns with non attendance at a premises if it was remote and a 999 call could not be made. The Policy and Development Manager confirmed that, in the Service's current policy, there was no provision for non attendance and an appliance would be mobilised.

Members queried the approach with regard to school premises. The Policy and Development Manager responded that Community Fire Protection had targeted attendance at Headteacher meetings and also the Service's fire inspectors visited schools and offered advice. Members commented that the Chair of the school governors had a responsibility to view the evacuation procedures and Members felt it was important that schools and governors were made aware of their responsibilities.

Members queried whether the Service would move towards the introduction of non attendance in the policy. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer responded that it had been decided to take a more structured approach and future changes would be considered after the performance had been monitored for a period of 12 months. Members agreed that a comprehensive report would be provided to the Committee in September and any future changes to the policy that the Committee recommended would be reported to the Authority's Policy Committee.

Members requested that the financial impact with regard to the reduction in attendance as a result of the reducing to one pump, be included in the 12 month evaluation report.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the six month review of the Unwanted Fire Signals reduction performance be noted; and**
- [2] the proposals for further changes to achieve Unwanted Fire Signals reductions be noted, with a final 12 month evaluation report to be presented to Members in September 2013.**

#### **4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Monitoring Officer advised that the 'Unwanted Fire Signals' report and the 'Interim Bonfire Report' which had been identified earlier in the meeting would be added to the forward work programme.

Members requested that the 'On Call Contracts and recruitment' identified on the April agenda included information regarding staff availability within on-call contracts. The Chief Fire Officer suggested that a demonstration of the GARTAN staffing system be provided to the Committee at its next meeting in April as part of the 'On Call Contracts' agenda item. He also requested Members considered that a separate agenda item 'On Call recruitment' be reported to the Committee in July which Members agreed.

Members requested that the agenda item 'Joint Use of Premises' be scheduled on a future agenda to be reported to this Committee.

Members asked whether the agenda item 'Age UK Outcomes' included an analysis of the impact of the Services' work carried out with the most vulnerable members of the community. It was agreed that a separate report would be provided to Members at the July meeting of the Committee