



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 2 September 2009 at Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D Topping (Chair), P Booher, J Crockatt, R Fletcher, G Merry, R K Polhill, G Smith and J Weatherill

APOLOGIES: Councillors John Joyce, and L Redhead

PART 1 – MATTERS DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Chair and Membership of the Committee

Members were asked to note the membership of the Committee for 2009-10, as agreed by the Fire Authority at their Annual General Meeting on 3 April 2009 and listed below:

Councillors D Topping (Chair)
P Booher
J Crockatt
R Fletcher
J Joyce
G Merry
R Polhill
L Redhead
G Smith
J Weatherill

B Declaration of Members Interest

There were no declarations of Members Interests.

RESOLVED:

- [1] the Membership of the Committee for 2009/10, as agreed by the Fire Authority at their annual general meeting on 3 April 2009 and as listed above in 1(A), be noted; and**

[2] That the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on Wednesday 11 March 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES STRATEGY

The Area Manager, Community Safety presented the Children and Young People Strategy for approval to the Policy Committee. The Strategy was a key element in the Service's desire to deliver safer and stronger communities in Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington. This Strategy would support the Children's Trusts and Children and Young People plans which sat under each Local Strategic Partnership within these 4 Unitary Authority areas.

Furthermore the strategy was one of three support 'pillars' which sat under the Service's overarching Community Safety Strategy which was approved by the Authority on 10 June of this year. It had been written to explain how we would deliver our children and young people programmes and interventions into the heart of communities through community engagement, robust intelligence gathering and partnership working. The evidence gathered through the delivery of these programmes would both support the outcomes and provide evidence against a number of Local Area Agreement targets aimed at improving the lives of children and young people and their communities.

The Strategy outlined how the Service would effectively identify vulnerable young community members, support them and their families and contribute to effective partnership working within a robust governance framework. All of this proactive work would support the Government's Every Child Matters strategy.

Members discussed the Outreach Fire Cadet Units that had been budgeted for. They discussed that there had been a suggestion to open a unit in Alsager however this had not materialised. Members were advised that four outreach cadet units had been opened but the areas were not identified at initial stages. The units were opened in Bollington, Nantwich, Chester College and at the Warrington Wolves Stadium. Members commended the Cadets for the work that they did and the recent trip to Ghana was highlighted

RESOLVED: That

[1] the draft Children and Young People Strategy 2009-2011 be approved.

3 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION: STRENGTHENING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with the consultation “Strengthening Local Democracy” provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The consultation put forward considerations for extending the Scrutiny functions of Local Authorities to other public service providers as well as asking about Partnership working, climate change and sub-regional arrangements. The paper set out a draft response to the consultation for Members’ consideration.

Members discussed the scrutiny levels that were already in place and felt that they were sufficient, additional functions would have high levels of resource implications and would duplicate current activities of the Authority. Furthermore Members queried why the Fire Authority did not have the Power of Well-being. The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Members that attempts had been made to lobby for the Power of Well-being however, MPs had informed the Authority that the Local Government Act 2000 provided the service with adequate powers.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the proposed response set out in Annex 1 of the report be approved and submitted as the Fire Authority’s response to CLG.**

4 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION-FIRE & RESILIENCE PROGRAMME IN-SERVICE MANAGEMENT

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with a Consultation Document in respect of Fire & Resilience Programme In-Service Management, produced by the Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG).

The consultation outlined the work that CLG had done with Fire & Rescue Services to deliver the programme. This included the provision of radios under the National Firelink Contract, regional call handling and mobilisation services under the Fire Control Project and the provision of vehicles and equipment to Fire and Rescue Authorities. In addition the consultation identified, under such arrangements, a number of functions that would still need to be performed at national level.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] that the proposed response set out in Annex B of the report be approved and submitted as the Fire Authority’s response to CLG.**

5 SUB-REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE/GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Emergency Response presented Members with an overview of the emerging sub – regional governance arrangements and partnership structures (architecture) following Local Government Re-organisation (LGR). In particular, a new (politically led) Leadership Board and a new Sub Regional Management team comprising Chief Officers.

Members requested that an indicator of the outcomes and benefits of these structures be provided at a future meeting to assess whether the structures were working.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the new sub regional structure/architecture be noted;**
- [2] Members endorse the Authority becoming an Associate Member of the Sub Regional Leaders Forum and the Chair to form part of the Cheshire and Warrington Leadership Board (without voting rights); and**
- [3] Members endorse the Chief Fire Officer to form part of the Sub Regional Management Team.**

6 CONSULTATION ON COUNTER-TERRORISM PAPERS

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Emergency Response presented Members with the consultation on counter terrorism, for information. The Government through the auspices of the Home Office and the Department of Communities and Local Government had produced two guidance documents relating to the provision of measures to ensure public safety from terrorist incidents.

The first document “Working Together to Protect Crowded Places” provided local stakeholders with a set of principles, which would guide the delivery of work by relevant agencies to reduce the vulnerability of crowded places from terrorist attacks. These principles involved a risk assessment of the vulnerability to attack and detailed the roles of national partners and key local stakeholders, including Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).

The second document, “Safer Places. A Counter Terrorism Supplement” was primarily a document that gave practical advice on how best to incorporate counter terrorism measures into the work of local stakeholders. It has been designed to fill gaps that had been identified in the previously issued Home Office guidance “Safer Places: the Planning System and Crime Prevention 2004”. This paper provided an overview of

the two documents, and identified the implications of their content on the Service.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be received; and

[2] the Authority noted the response to the consultation.