



MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 1 February 2012 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00.

PRESENT: Councillors, M Biggin, J Kerr Brown, K Musgrave, S Nelson, M Simon (Chair), J Weatherill and Independent Member W Ravenscroft

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Tate.

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

the minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 30 November 2011 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 25 January 2012 be received, for information.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION

2 REVIEW OF FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with the Performance and Overview Committee's forward work programme, and confirmed that the items suggested at the previous meeting in November noted in the minutes, (profile for retirement and potential for voluntary redundancies, position in relation to the historic pension payments and the staff satisfaction survey action plan update) would be scheduled to a future meeting.

The Monitoring Officer suggested Members consider moving this item to the end of the meeting agenda in future, so any additional items that had been

identified during the meeting could be discussed as part of the Forward Work programme. Members agreed this should be changed for the next meeting.

Members queried whether this Committee would receive any reporting on the Cheshire West and Chester pilot in relation to community budgets as the Service was a partner in this scheme. The Chief Fire Officer responded that the Service was informed at Sub regional level, and where appropriate, information would be presented to Members at their Planning Days. He confirmed that if any policy changes were proposed, reports would be presented to Members.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the content of the forward work programme be noted; and**
- [2] the forward work programme be moved to the end of the agenda for future meetings.**

3 INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS REPORT 2011 - 12

The Corporate Intelligence Unit Manager presented Members with the Internal Audit recommendations status report for the current financial year which provided an update on the implementation of action plans developed in response to the recommendations made by RSM Tenon, the Authority's internal auditors.

The Corporate Intelligence Unit Manager highlighted each audit and the number of recommendations identified, which were prioritised in relation to the level of risk. She confirmed that all actions detailed on the action plan were due to be completed within the next 2-3 months following the 7 audits which had been completed to date.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that in future Members would receive quarterly updates and these would accompany the quarterly performance reports. A quarterly update would be added to the forward work programme.

Members discussed the report and highlighted the importance of working with young people to engage them in the IRMP consultation process as detailed in the recommendations. The Head of Communications responded that the Service would make sure the Service's youth programmes such as RESPECT and the fire cadets were engaged more fully in the process. Members suggested the Service could engage with local School Councils or the Youth Parliament and co-opt young people onto the Fire Authority or one of the Committees to encourage their ongoing engagement. The Chief Fire Officer agreed that the engagement of young people was important to the Service. However he suggested that Officers would need to look at the best method to engage young people at formal meetings, as the Constitution currently does not cover or allow this.

RESOLVED: That

the status report be reviewed and noted.

4 HQ SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) INSTALLATION

The Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Officer introduced the paper to Members which explained the outcome of the installation project for the Solar Photovoltaic panels at Fire Service Headquarters. He explained the challenges the project team faced to meet the December 2011 deadline. This occurred as a result of a change in government policy which would have reduced the Feed in Tariff payments available to the Service.

The Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Officer and the project team worked together with the chosen installer, Phoenix Renewables Ltd, to reduce the original installation timescale from the planned three weeks to one week.

He summarised for Members the estimated benefits and savings on energy costs over a 25 year period.

The project was delivered under budget and the underspend would be used to install Solar Photovoltaic panels on the appliance bays at two Fire Stations, (subject to planning permission being obtained).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer thanked the project team for delivering the project ahead of the original timescale, which was an excellent achievement.

Members queried whether the potential reduced manufacturing costs of solar panels had been factored into future estimates, and it was confirmed that it had been considered.

Members also asked whether it was accurate to assume an annual increase of 7.5% in electricity costs as detailed in the estimated figures. The Head of Finance confirmed that performance against these estimates would need to be monitored.

The ongoing maintenance costs were discussed, and it was confirmed they would be minimal, as the only maintenance required would be to clean the panels periodically. Generous warranties exist for the key elements of the installation.

RESOLVED: That Members note

- [1] the significant financial and environmental benefits of the installation, as well as a clear demonstration of the Service's commitment to reducing its impact on the environment;**
- [2] the installation, as part of a wider drive to reduce Service carbon emissions which has resulted in a 23% reduction, or a £57,300 saving, compared to last year;**
- [3] that the project was delivered £42,500 under budget and two and a half months before the scheduled completion date under extremely unpredictable market conditions; and**

- [4] the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Officer and project team were thanked for all the excellent work done on behalf of the Service.**

5 2011 BONFIRE REPORT

The Arson Reduction Manager summarised the 2011 Bonfire Analysis Report to Members, which detailed the preventative and operational activities of the Service and its local partners across Cheshire. He highlighted the reduction in small deliberate fires compared to last year. The report detailed a number of activities by the Service, which had taken place within the unitary areas including the organisation of educational events.

He asked Members to consider the recommendations within the 2011 Bonfire Analysis Report e.g. that the Service lead on the delivery of targeted education in schools and continues with its 'tolerance' policy.

The Arson Reduction Manager referred to the notable cost savings which resulted from the targeted availability and use of the midi appliances in key areas, which enabled the structural appliances to be available for other incidents.

Members suggested that the Service would need to consider the additional challenge of bonfire celebrations for the Queens Diamond Jubilee in June, and the Arson Reduction Manager confirmed the Service had noted this possibility.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that additional appliances were made available between the busiest times of 5pm to 10pm in the evenings during the bonfire period.

Members discussed the Bonfire Removal schemes across Cheshire, and the provision of skips in certain areas for the disposal of waste prior to the bonfire period, was also discussed.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the content of the report be noted; and

[2] the recommendations be supported.

6 ICT INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Members with an update on the latest position of the ICT Programme of Change. He reported that the programme was originally presented to Members during late 2011, and included a three phased approach which addressed issues with the infrastructure, systems support and software consolidation.

He summarised each phase, which commenced with the replacement of the existing out of date technology and single points of failure. The planned refresh of the network, would increase capacity and there would be no single point of

failure. The new supplier had been chosen following a procurement process, and a contract had still to be concluded with Updata. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer indicated that there had been discussions with other public services about collaboration. Whilst these had not been pursued at this stage the contractual arrangements about to be entered into should provide sufficient flexibility to take advantage of future opportunities. The planned completion of the first phase of the programme was Autumn 2012, and would result in a much quicker more resilient system.

Members agreed that an upgrade to the existing systems was required, and queried when all three phases of the programme would be completed. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the programme was scheduled for completion in 18 months time.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the content of the report be noted.**