



MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 4 July 2012 at Lecture Theatre, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00.

PRESENT: Councillors, P Carey, D Flude, M Simon, A Tate (Chair), J Weatherill and N Wright

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Shauna Mallinson, representative from RSM Tenon

PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A CHAIR AND MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE 2012/13

Members were asked to note the Chair and membership of the Committee for 2012/13, as agreed by the Fire Authority at its annual general meeting on 13 June 2012 and listed below:

Councillors:	Independent Member:
A Tate – Chair	Mr W Ravenscroft
P Carey	
D Flude	
P Harris	
M Simon	
J Weatherill	
N Wright	

Councillor Tate, on taking the Chair, wished to place on record her thanks to Councillor Simon for her contribution in her term of office as Chair of the Committee, over the last three years.

B APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor P Harris and Independent Member Mr W Ravenscroft.

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 4 April 2012 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 20 June 2012 be received, for information.

MATTERS ARISING:

Members requested that the item contained in the Policy Committee minutes with regard to the 'Joint use of Poynton Fire Station' could be an item for future discussion by the Committee.

Members referred to the Service's Capital Funding bid submission (which was detailed in the Policy Committee minutes), and queried when the Service would be notified of whether the bid had been successful. The Head of Community Safety advised Members that the guidance indicated that the outcomes of the bids would be announced by the Minister in September.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION

2 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORTING 2011-12: QUARTER 4 (END OF YEAR)

The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications introduced this report which provided Members with the organisation's financial and service performance position at the end of quarter 4 of the current financial year.

The Head of Finance presented the Service's financial position detailed in the Annex that accompanied the report. He advised Members that the final accounts had recently been reviewed by the Closure of Accounts Committee, and were now subject to external audit. However, it was not anticipated this would lead to any significant change. He confirmed that the final accounts would be reported to the Fire Authority in September.

He summarised the underspend and how this had been achieved across the Service, by highlighting the principal contributory factors. He explained that the underspend had been carefully managed to offset the impact of the liability in respect of the reclassification of injury pensions costs.

Members asked about the position in regard to the under-establishment of on-call firefighters, detailed as an underspend within the report. The Head of Service Delivery responded that the Service carried out the recruitment process for on-call firefighters on a quarterly basis. The recruitment process for this quarter was currently underway, with the next one planned for October.

The Head of Planning, Performance & Communications summarised the Service's overall performance which was detailed in the headline indicators

attached as an annex to the report. He advised Members that the Service would continue to deliver safety campaigns to target the reduction in numbers of injuries and fatalities in property fires, which included the continued good work carried out in delivering Home Safety Assessments.

He advised Members that the key proposals as set out in IRMP 8 were completed, with the exception of the proposals for Macclesfield Fire Station. This project had been incorporated into the Service's full review of shift systems that was currently ongoing and would be discussed with Members in more detail at the Planning Days scheduled in July. He explained that the individual departmental reports attached as annexes provided Members with more detailed information on the delivery of the proposals and performance achieved against targets.

Members questioned whether the Service and Police shared intelligence, regarding certain individuals who are a known threat to setting 'deliberate fires'. The Head of Service Performance confirmed that the Police were proactive in sharing information with the Service to increase awareness in the particular areas these individuals may target.

Members asked about the outcomes of the Community Safety review, which led to the appointment of Locality Safety Managers and how this was working out. The Head of Community Safety responded that the results had served them better strategically, and explained that it had empowered the lead advocates to attend the right meetings and meet the right people to enable them to better influence the community. The impact of these changes would continue to be monitored.

Members discussed the number of fatalities in accidental dwelling fires. The Head of Planning, Performance and Communications explained that the Service undertook detailed investigations on the circumstances surrounding each incident. He advised Members that the Service had continued to work closely with the Coroner which was proving beneficial and lessons learnt from the incidents had been used in subsequent safety communications.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the 2011-12 End of Year progress report be noted, with no issues identified which required further scrutiny.

3 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2011-12 QUARTER 4 PROGRESS REPORT

The Corporate Intelligence Unit Manager introduced the Internal Audit Progress Report which had been produced by RSM Tenon, the Authority's internal auditors. She explained that this Committee scrutinised the Internal Audit plan on a quarterly basis, and the first annex of this report included the end of year progress against the plan, and also key findings and recommendations. She advised Members that the second annex to the report detailed action plans developed by the Service's managers in response to internal audit recommendations made during the audits carried out in 2011-12.

She introduced Shauna Mallinson, a Senior Manager from RSM Tenon who was in attendance at the meeting and provided Members with a summary of the Internal Audit Progress report. The Internal Auditor advised Members that nine audit reports had been completed and were detailed within the report, and the two follow-up audits were showing reasonable progress. She identified that some recommendations from the IT Healthcheck had not been progressed by the Service, but they were not significant and did not impact the overall opinion. She explained that these findings had been reported to the Authority's Policy Committee in June as an overall positive opinion.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained to Members that the recommendation that had not been progressed, had been considered but had not been implemented, after assessing the risks against the business needs of the Service.

Members asked the Internal Auditor whether she was happy with the Service's response. She confirmed that it was not an issue, as it was a high level recommendation for consideration and did not affect the overall opinion reported.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the content of the reports be noted; and**
- [2] no audit recommendations were highlighted which required further detail by Members**

4 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION'S ROLE IN PREVENTING FIRES IN COMMERCIAL PREMISES

The Head of Community Fire Protection introduced this report, which had been produced following a request from Members at a previous meeting of the Committee. The report provided more detailed information on how Community Fire Protection prevent fires in commercial buildings.

He gave Members an overview of the core activities carried out by the department, which focussed work in four main areas. These were:

- enforcing fire safety legislation;
- reducing the impact of arson;
- investigating the cause of fires; and
- providing safety information to businesses.

The Head of Community Fire Protection summarised each area of work. He described a risk-based audit programme with both random and targeted inspections on commercial premises. He explained peak activity inspections were also carried out, for example, at cinemas and bingo halls at busy times.

He advised Members that the Arson Reduction Manager worked closely with the Police, local authorities and other agencies on schemes which targeted arson reduction. He summarised the prevention work carried out by the business safety team who lead on campaigns and initiatives (e.g. promoting the fitting of sprinklers in premises, to help control fires).

Members queried whether it was felt that enough of the Service's resources were provided to this department to enable the prevention work required for non-domestic premises. The Head of Community Fire Protection responded that there was a framework in place to manage resources if an issue was identified in a particular area. In addition training had taken place recently with operational crews to enable them to carry out fire safety audits, which further increased resources.

Members queried whether the court fines that resulted from successful prosecutions by the Service, were available to the Service to reclaim to fund future prevention work. Officers responded that they would look into this and report back to Members. The Head of Community Fire Protection advised Members that the Service had been successful in the recovery of legal costs awarded by the court, for the prosecution cases carried out to date.

RESOLVED: That

[1] Members noted the content and activities outlined in the report.

5 HSA TARGETING

The Head of Community Safety introduced this report to Members which provided an update on progress following the introduction of a new approach to the delivery of Home Safety Assessments for 2011-12, with a focus on the most vulnerable households. These households included individuals identified in data compiled with the help of partners to create a heightened risk dataset. Initially a number of issues were encountered when targeting 'high risk' households and it had proved difficult to deliver Home Safety Assessments to these households and achieve the target that had been set. A stakeholder focus group met to discuss the delivery methodology and identify improvements.

Members suggested that in the current economic climate, local authorities faced budget cuts in social care intervention, and this could result in vulnerable families and younger people not always being reported and therefore not identified within the 'high risk' data. The Head of Community Safety acknowledged that this could be an issue, and that continued work with partners would be important.

The Risk Analysis and Intelligence Manager provided Members with a presentation of the targeting methodology used by the Service to identify and target the top 20,000 high risk households. He advised Members that partnership referrals were also received which were given high priority for delivery of a Home Safety Assessment. He explained that the NHS shared data records with the Service, to which the Service then applied further priorities (such as age, gender and types of premises lived in), to identify the highest risk households.

Members asked how the data was maintained and kept up to date. The Risk Analysis and Intelligence Manager, acknowledging this was a challenge, confirmed that the data was refreshed on an annual basis.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the report be noted.

6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer advised that 'Joint Use of Premises' item identified by Members earlier in the meeting would be added to the work programme.

He also advised Members that an item had been added to the October Performance and Overview agenda 'Annual Health and Safety Report'.