



**MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 5 October 2011 at Meeting Room 3, Fire Service HQ, at 10:00.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors M Biggin, J Kerr-Brown, K Musgrave, S Nelson, M Simon (Chair), A Tate and J Weatherill

**PART 1 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC**

**1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Independent Member W Ravenscroft.

**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 6 July 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 7 September 2011 be received, for information.

**ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION**

**2 REVIEW OF FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with an update on the Performance and Overview Committee's forward work programme, and asked if there were any items to be changed or added.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the report entitled 'Analysis and breakdown of the cause of fire fatalities during 2010/11' to be considered at the November meeting, would need to be deferred, until inquests were completed. This might mean a delay of six months, or more.

Members discussed the inclusion of an update report on the Community Safety work with vulnerable people and the new target delivery methodology for Home Safety Assessments (HSA's). Members stated it would be useful to have details of particular issues being encountered in their constituent areas in delivering HSA's for the vulnerable people in their community, and to flag with Members which parts of Cheshire are most at risk. Members also felt that these issues could be raised in their specific areas Unitary Performance Group (UPG) meetings with Officers.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Fire Service was now more focussed on targeting vulnerable properties and there were some difficulties that had been encountered in accessing these premises to carry out a HSA. It was agreed that an interim update would be presented to Members at the November Performance and Overview Committee meeting and a further update in the first quarter of 2012.

The Chair also asked that it be noted that there should be a two pronged approach to progress this issue both at UPG meetings and at this Committee.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the content of the forward work programme be noted;**
- [2] the following item be added to the work programme:  
30 November: an interim update on the Community Safety, Home Safety Assessment delivery methodology and progress, with a further update to the Committee in the first quarter of 2012; and**
- [3] the following item be deferred on the work programme:  
30 November: Analysis and breakdown of the causes of fire fatalities during 2010/11 be deferred for six months.**

**3 Q1 – SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORTING AGAINST 2011-12 PLANS**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the report and highlighted that information within the Annexes. He explained that these objectives were derived from IRMP objectives and broken down into departmental objectives before ultimately forming objectives within individual's appraisals. Members were asked if they were happy with the way the report and Annexes were presented separately for each department, or would they prefer an overall summary and not as much detail. Members agreed they found it useful to have the amount of detail provided and to keep this format for future progress reporting.

Members discussed research that had taken place with takeaway premises, to address the issues when engaging with these communities to improve fire safety in these type of premises. The Head of Community Fire Protection responded that Cheshire Fire & Rescue had worked in conjunction with the Environmental Health department and had produced a Guidance leaflet for commercial premises. This leaflet was now being used nationally, as this had been identified as a national issue.

Members queried whether the Co-Responder scheme was to continue. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Fire Service was looking to expand this scheme further across more areas. Members agreed that this scheme had been very valuable and successful in the area it was currently operating in. The expansion of this scheme would be discussed further with the Ambulance Service, the partners of the Fire Service in this scheme.

Members requested that the HSA Research data, which was identified in the report, was fed into the report being delivered to the Committee in November.

Members asked about the latest position with regard to the Fire Service becoming the service provider for Road Safety in Cheshire East. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this was scheduled to be discussed at the next Scrutiny Board meeting, and was confident that the Service would be dispensing some Road Safety for Cheshire East going forward.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the current financial and Service performance against 2011-12 plans be noted.**

#### **4 MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT AGAINST 2011-12 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

The Internal Audit representative from RSM Tenon presented the report and provided a summary of work undertaken to date by the Internal Audit team during 2011. RSM Tenon had made one recommendation within the three finalised reports delivered to date, (Operational Station Visits - compliance with Financial Regulations, Review of Integrated Risk Management Plan & consultation process and Risk Management). With regard to the Operational Station Visits Compliance with Financial Regulations report the recommendation was that documentation should be more effectively managed for goods received for On-Call stations. This had been addressed positively.

RSM Tenon attended the Risk Management Board meeting held in September to act as an independent representative to challenge the processes in place in managing the key risks facing the Service.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the content of the Internal Audit progress report be received.**

#### **5 COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION PROSECUTIONS UPDATE**

The Head of Community Fire Protection presented the report. He set the update against the changes which took place as a result of the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order) in 2006. At that time the Fire Service had become the enforcing authority for virtually all premises that were not single private dwellings (apart from some specialist commercial premises).

The Head of Community Fire Protection summarised the cases prosecuted by the Fire Service to date, and the current ongoing cases being investigated and detailed the costs incurred for pursuing these cases.

Members queried whether the Fire Service could benefit from fines awarded. They also asked whether the Service was successful in claiming its costs.

The Monitoring Officer responded: fines were retained by the court; costs were awarded at the courts discretion and could vary, and there was no hard and fast rule. The Service does claim an hourly rate for solicitors costs. In the last case prosecuted, an in-house solicitor was used for all legal work, (instead of employing external solicitors) which reduced costs considerably. Generally, costs claims were successful, albeit it may take some considerable time for the sums to be paid.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the report be noted;**
- [2] the Performance and Overview Committee continue to endorse the approach to managing prosecutions and enforcement used by the Service; and**
- [3] this issue be added to the Performance and Overview Committee future work programme for annual review.**

## **6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE, EQUALITY ACTION PLAN, AND EQUALITY MONITORING REPORT**

The Head of Corporate Communications presented the report which included details of feedback from the Peer Assessment on the Equality Standard for Local Government, and the revised Equalities Action Plan. The final element of the report was the Service's Annual Equality Monitoring Report 2010/11.

The Head of Corporate Communications advised that the draft action plan had been submitted as part of the peer assessment and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service had been successful in achieving Excellent in respect of the Equality Framework. This achievement would be promoted on letterheads, local media and with Fire Service staff.

The Internal Auditor representative from RSM Tenon queried the governance arrangements for the Equalities Action plan and was advised that the Equality Task Group met on a quarterly basis to progress the action plan, and the Performance and Overview Committee received a half yearly update.

Members discussed certain actions within the plan, which included the Annual Fire Fatalities report and the inclusion of injuries data to enable trends and issues to be identified. Members also highlighted the Work Experience programme, and it was confirmed that a more proactive and businesslike approach was being taken in managing this programme to include Equality and Diversity issues.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the update on performance following the Service's peer assessment for Excellent of the Equality Framework for Fire and Rescue Services be received;**
- [2] the Equalities Action Plan be approved ; and**
- [3] the Equality Monitoring Report 2010-2011 be received.**

**7 DAY CREWING PLUS SHIFT SYSTEM UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced a presentation to Members on the latest update on the key projects for the implementation of the Day Crewing Plus Shift System at Macclesfield Community Fire Station.

The three key projects included Human Resources, Accommodation Block and Communications updates were provided as follows:

Human Resources

The recruitment process was ready to be commenced once all other issues had been satisfactorily concluded.

Accommodation Block

Plans of the different aspects of the accommodation block were presented to Members. These plans had been shown to staff, and feedback on the design had been incorporated where possible. The Service was focussed on providing a good working environment and it being environmentally friendly.

Communications

There was a designated place on the internal website for all employees and some open days had been held.

The initial Equality and Diversity assessment that had been undertaken had highlighted some issues. Accordingly a full Equality Impact Assessment needed to be undertaken. A staff questionnaire had been developed to gain feedback as part of this process.

The Internal Audit representative queried timescales for the delivery of the project. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the project should be completed by the summer of 2012.

Members discussed how increased use of the community room at Macclesfield Fire Station could be encouraged and agreed it would be beneficial for new Members to have a visit to fire stations. This could be discussed further at the Members Away Day in October.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] **the update on Day Crewing Plus Shift System at Macclesfield Community Fire Station be noted.**

**8 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced the Asset Management Strategy which was approved at the Fire Authority's Policy Committee meeting held in June 2011. The strategy was produced to assist in targeting the best use of the Fire Services's assets and to realise any identified savings. He explained that an overall summary document (the Asset Management Strategy) and three further more detailed documents (Plans entitled Land & Buildings, Transport and Operational Equipment) made up the Strategy. A copy of each document was circulated. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that the documents would be working documents which could be monitored by the Performance and Overview Committee. The next step was to develop a 10 year refresh programme.

Members asked if the documents could be made available for scrutiny by the Committee on the internet. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer responded that a Members access site area within the Service's website could be explored. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer suggested to Members he could present further details (to include the 10 year refresh programme). It was his intention to provide with an updated position on an annual basis.

Members discussed solar power and asked if the Service had considered that energy tariffs may not be as favourable in future. This had been noted and was confirmed by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

The Internal Audit representative from RSM Tenon queried what would happen with regard to the baseline for carbon reduction if a new build was introduced, and it was confirmed that the Service would re-assess.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] **the update on the Asset Management Strategy be noted**

\*\*\*\*\*