

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 MARCH 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Ted Grannell (Chair) , Cllrs Robbie Ayres, Roy Gladden, Barbara Murray, Jean Stapleton, Lesley Rennie and Anthony Boyle

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:
Cllr Sharon Sullivan

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prior to the start of the meeting, information regarding general housekeeping and confirmation of the recording of proceedings was provided by the Chair to all in attendance.

The Chair then declared the meeting open and recording of the proceedings commenced.

1. Preliminary Matters

Members considered the identification of declarations of interest, any urgent additional items, and any business that may require the exclusion of the press and public.

Resolved that:

- a) no declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the Agenda
- b) no additional items of business to be considered as matters of urgency were determined by the Chair; and
- c) no items of business required the exclusion of the press and public during consideration thereof because of the possibility of the disclosure of exempt information.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 11th December 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. WIRRAL DISTRICT UPDATE

(CFO/018/15)

Members were provided with a detailed presentation by Group Manager Paul Murphy – District Manager for the Wirral.

The presentation provided a “story of place” for the Wirral, highlighting key facts around the geography, demographics and key risk factors within the District.

Maps were shown detailing the four constituency areas, the various wards; and the current location of community Fire Stations within the Wirral District.

Information was then provided regarding the number and type of incidents occurring within the District. This highlighted a reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires – however it was noted that unfortunately 3 accidental dwelling fire fatalities have occurred within the District during 2014/15. Reductions were also reported for commercial building fires and anti-social behaviour fires. However, there has been an increase in the number of vehicle fires, which is thought to be at least partially related to organised crime and the use of vehicle fires as threats. Members were informed that work is underway with Police colleagues to address this issue.

The presentation also highlighted that the number of road traffic collisions MFRS are attending within the District are also on the increase. Members were informed that MFRS continue to work in conjunction with partners, in an effort to reduce RTC's, through education and enforcement.

Members were also provided with an overview of the partnerships and information sharing arrangements within the District, to help identify the most vulnerable people and target resources appropriately. It highlighted that in terms of vulnerability, there appears to be a “middle corridor” of individuals between the ages of 40 and 49, who live alone and may smoke, drink excessively or use drugs, but who are not a focus for any particular agency.

Members raised a number of questions in relation to the presentation.

In relation to the identification of vulnerable people within the “middle corridor”, Members were informed that Wirral Council were asked to share information regarding people claiming single person Council Tax benefit. This combined with sanitised data from the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership (CWP), enabled the number of properties to be reduced down to a manageable level for intervention.

In terms of targeting resources towards vulnerable older people, Members were informed that significant amounts of work has been undertaken to identify the location of vulnerable older people, but the problem has been in getting across the threshold to make interventions. Officers are working closely with health providers in an effort to access those individuals identified.

In relation to data sharing, Members were informed that Officers only utilise data which supports targeted intervention and protects the most vulnerable within Merseyside.

With regards to incident numbers within station areas, the Committee were informed that in the past, appliances may not have attended secondary fires within their station area, as the small fires unit may have been mobilised to such incidents to enable the appliance to remain available for life risk incidents. As the Authority no longer have that luxury given the reduction in the number of frontline fire engines, Officers confirmed that it will always be the nearest appliance which is mobilised to an incident.

GM Paul Murphy was thanked for the presentation.

Members then considered Report CFO/018/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the performance of the Wirral District over 2014/15.

Members Resolved that:

- a) Performance in relation to the Wirral District for 2014/15, be noted.
- b) The information contained within the Report and accompanying presentation, be noted.
- c) A report and presentation be provided to a future meeting of the Committee regarding Fire Control and the mobilisation process.

4. Service Delivery Plan 3rd Quarter

(CFO/015/15)

Members were provided with a presentation by Jackie Sutton – IRMP Officer, concerning an overview of performance against the objects and targets within the Service Delivery Plan for 2014/15 for the third quarter.

A number of questions were raised by Members concerning the number of fire fatalities for the year, the number of RTC's attended and the ability of the Authority to influence this number, the number of operational staff injuries; and sickness absence levels.

In relation to the number of fire fatalities, Members were informed that despite there being less accidental dwelling fires so far this year, there have been more fire fatalities.. Members were informed that older people are increasingly encouraged or required (Care Act) to remain in their own home, which brings with it some challenges for the Authority in terms of keeping those individuals

safe from fire. Members were advised that this issue will be the focus of the Home Safety Strategy being developed at present, which will be brought back to Members in due course.

In terms of the number of RTC's attended, Members were informed that targets and allocation of resources are reviewed regularly. In conjunction with Wirral Borough Council, resources are currently focused on targeting young people aged 16 to 29, with the "Suddenly from Nowhere" presentation being delivered to pupils across all Wirral Colleges. Should it be found that these interventions are not having an impact, the Authority will need to renegotiate the package with Wirral Council to invest time and resources elsewhere as appropriate.

With regards to the number of operational staff injuries, Members were advised that operational staff are now training more, and the number of injuries has increased as a result of this.

Members suggested that the operational staff injuries figure, be separated out into injuries obtained whilst undertaking risk critical training and injuries sustained whilst attending incidents.

In terms of sickness absence, the Committee were informed that there has been a slight reduction observed for February. Conduct and Capability Training is currently being delivered to all Managers across the organisation; and it is hoped that the introduction of the new policies and procedures; and support mechanism, will start to have a positive impact on absence levels.

Members were also informed that as there is now a full 12 months of data available, the target in relation to AFA's has been revisited and amended.

Members thanked Jackie for the presentation.

Members then considered Report CFO/015 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning scrutiny of performance against the objectives and targets set in the Service Delivery plan 2014/15 for the period April to December 2014.

Members Resolved that:

- a) Performance concerning the IRMP, Service Delivery Plan and Functional Plan action points; and the suite of Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15, for the period April to December 2014, be noted.
- b) A report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee concerning performance in relation to Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Actuations.
- c) Further information be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee with a breakdown operational staff injuries.

5. Cross Border Incidents

(CFO/017/15)

Members considered Report CFO/017/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the impact on response times of cross border mobilisations by MFRA appliances.

Members were provided with an overview of the report which highlighted that there have been 76 occasions on which MFRA appliances have been deployed outside of Merseyside. Of these 76 occasions, 43 involved some element of operational activity, whilst in 33 there was no assistance required. However, MFRA have only requested assistance from other Fire and Rescue Authorities on 7 occasions.

Members were informed that MFRA assets have also been deployed Nationally and Internationally to provide assistance, which are generally for protracted periods.

Members raised several questions in relation to the report.

With regards to attendance at International incidents, Members were advised that the Authority is reimbursed for costs incurred.

It was also noted that MFRA is able to provide assistance at National and International incidents, due to it employing fully trained, highly professional wholetime staff.

Members Resolved that

- a) The information contained within the report, which provides evidence that MFRA continue to support over border requests, with the data demonstrating there is no significant information to indicate that this activity impacts locally on response times (LPI 137), be noted.
- b) Officers be directed to continually monitor over border incidents to ensure that this activity does not impact locally on performance figures.

6. Standing Item: Forward Work Plan

Members considered the Forward Work plan of the Performance & Scrutiny Committee.

Members Resolved that:

- a) A report concerning the effectiveness of the AFA Policy, be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.
- b) Further information regarding operational staff injuries, be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

- c) A report concerning the effectiveness of the Authority's consultation process, included within the Forward Work Plan, be deferred pending conclusion of the public consultation currently underway within the Wirral District.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 21 May 2015

Signed: _____

Date: _____