

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 SEPTEMBER 2015

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Robbie Ayres (Chair) , Cllrs Ray Halpin, Barbara Murray, Jean Stapleton, Lesley Rennie and Anthony Boyle

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:
Jimmy Mahon and Sharon Sullivan

6. Chairs Announcement

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) The following declarations of interest were made by individual Members in relation to items of business on the Agenda:

Cllrs Lesley Rennie and Jean Stapleton declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 3 – “Merseyside Health And Wellbeing Partnership”, due to being Trustees of the Fire Support Network.

- 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 23rd July 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. Merseyside Health And Wellbeing Partnership

(CFO/076/15)

Members considered Report CFO/076/15 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning a review of the work currently being undertaken between Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority (MFRA) and Health Partners.

Members were provided with some contextual information, highlighting the Authority's shift in focus which dates back to 1999, towards prevention activity and improving the safety of Merseyside's residents.

Members were informed that MFRA led the way in complimenting a reactive service with a proactive strategy, introducing the concept of Home Fire Safety Check's. The outcome of this proactive strategy was a significant reduction in fire deaths and injuries, and accidental dwelling fires.

The overview highlighted ways in which the Fire and Rescue Service can support people to make healthy choices, from our operational firefighters who are seen as being excellent role models for healthy lifestyles, developing our partnership arrangements; and making use of our community fire stations to support projects aimed at reducing health inequalities.

Members were also informed of the recent Fire and Health Summit, hosted by MFRA, which attracted attendance from a number of health related partners. This Summit looked at how agencies across Merseyside could work in partnership and take a more holistic approach to assisting those most vulnerable within our communities. It also introduced the concept of a "Safe and Well Visit"; and how our staff and staff from the Fire Support Network can add value to the HFSC visits.

Discussion took place around the report, with questions raised regarding the strength of partnerships and sustainability of the initiative, safeguarding and referrals.

Members were informed that the local Health Summit was extremely well supported, with buy-in from all partners at a Strategic Management level. The principle will be that MFRA will deliver whatever is required however we will need to be informed what the requirements will be; and the work will need to be funded accordingly. Members were also informed that the extent of the future financial challenge will determine the extent to which we can extend our offer.

With regards to safeguarding, Members were informed that a Task & Finish Group will be set up to consider necessary safeguards, for MFRA staff and the public.

Further discussion took place around broadening the role of the Fire Support Network to deliver some of these interventions; the need to mitigate any impact on the delivery of our core function; and possible timescales for the introduction of “Safe and Well” Visits.

Resolved that:

- a) The development of the “Safe and Well” visit be supported by Members, and that Members recognise the potential impact that it may have when tackling wider health determinants.
- b) Potential opportunities that such an approach could have with regard to targeted health interventions be explored. These interventions may tackle issues such as: social isolation, mental health, slips trips and falls, hospital discharge, through signposting, referrals or direct bridging.
- c) The development of local partnerships within Merseyside, which encourage local action(s) to prevent or reduce service demand and improve the quality of life of persons with acute or chronic conditions, be reviewed.
- d) The effect of delivering “Safe and Well” visits be monitored by the Committee, to ensure there is no adverse impact on the delivery of core functions.

4. Presentation - Care Act: Safeguarding Adults

Members considered a presentation from Duncan Robinson – Solicitor from Liverpool City Council, concerning the Care Act and Safeguarding Adults.

The presentation informed Members that the Care Act 2014 has fundamentally changed how Local Authorities deliver community care packages. It has required Local Authorities to act, should it believe an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect; and co-operate with relevant partners (of which the Fire & Rescue Authority is one), to protect the adult.

The Care Act 2014 introduced Safeguarding duties for adults, which amongst other things, aims to encourage organisations to consider people as individuals, taking account of what those individuals want for themselves; and support them in making choices and having control about how they wish to live. Members were informed that this has huge implications for fire and rescue authorities, as there will be more vulnerable people choosing to remain living independently; and these vulnerable people will be dispersed amongst our communities.

The presentation highlighted that the Care Act 2014, required local authorities to establish Safeguarding Adults Boards. However within Liverpool, such a Board has been established for some time, with MFRA playing a key role in terms of representation and data sharing. Input from MFRA at the Safeguarding Adults Board, has enabled plans to be put in place for vulnerable individuals, which enables them to lead the life they want to as safely as possible.

Members were informed that safeguarding also aims to inform the wider public of what safeguarding is, to enable society to be safer and more inclusive.

In addition, the guidance has highlighted that there are other types of abuse, beyond physical, which need to be considered - for example, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse and modern slavery.

The presentation went on to detail the safeguarding procedures which should be established and followed.

Furthermore, Members were informed that Safeguarding Adults Boards must produce a Strategic Plan; and in producing such plan, should make use of all available evidence and intelligence from its partners, such as fire and rescue authorities, the ambulance service, housing providers, prison and probation services, GP's and trading standards. It was highlighted that in developing the plan, it is important to understand pressures facing frontline staff, to ensure that measures put in place will work effectively on the frontline.

Discussion took place following the presentation, with questions raised around MFRA representation on local Safeguarding Boards following the move away from a District based delivery model to functional delivery; and how agencies will work together to avoid individuals having to duplicate the provision of information.

Members were informed that within Liverpool, a joint working agreement has been signed off with the NHS, to enable health colleagues to undertake certain functions of a local authority social worker; and vice-versa, which should reduce the need for individuals to repeat information to a number of agencies.

Furthermore, Members were informed that all MFRA Operational staff and advocacy staff are fully aware of Safeguarding, with relevant processes in place to deal with any safeguarding issues; and make referrals to partners as necessary.

Such employees are regularly exposed to vulnerable individuals in the course of their day-to-day work. This is why representatives from MFRA are Co-Opted onto Safeguarding Boards, with representation now being shared between the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, the Area Manager for Community Risk Management; and relevant Group Managers.

Members then thanked Duncan for the presentation.

5. Standing Item: Forward Work Plan

Members considered the Forward Work Plan of the Performance & Scrutiny Committee and whether there was any feedback from Lead Members on the scrutiny work they are currently involved in; any scrutiny questions they felt should be dealt with under a different priority, or any questions they feel should be added to the Forward Work Plan.

Resolved that:

- a) The following feedback was provided by Lead Members on the scrutiny work they are currently in:
 - Cllr Barbara Murray updated the Committee on the recent training session held for Members on Effective Engagement. She informed the Committee that this training was arranged in response to the Engagement Commitment to improve the Authority's engagement with all employees; and in preparation for a staff engagement day which will be held in November.
She informed the Committee that the training was very well received, however it was identified that it would be of benefit to hold a further session prior to the Staff Engagement Event, which will be scheduled in due course.
- b) There were no scrutiny questions that Members felt should be dealt with under a different priority.
- c) There were no questions that Members felt should be added to the Forward Work Plan.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 5 November 2015

Signed: _____

Date: _____