

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PERFORMANCE & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 MARCH 2016

MINUTES

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

Also Present:

Apologies of absence were received from:
Jimmy Mahon and Barbara Murray

7. 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 relation to Agenda Item 3 – “Service Delivery Plan Quarter 2 2015/16 Report”, 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 12th January 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN QUARTER 3 2015/16 REPORT

Members considered Report CFO/015/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning scrutiny of performance against the objectives and the performance targets/ outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2015/16 for the period April 2015 to December 2015.

A presentation was delivered to Members providing an overview of progress against Service Delivery Plan and Functional Plan action points; and Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), against the outcome targets.

Members were advised that for the period April to December 2015, there had been a reduction in accidental dwelling fires, deliberate anti-social behaviour fires; and road traffic collisions, compared with the same period last year. In addition, performance in relation to confining fires to the room of origin; and attaining the attendance standard, had been consistently above the target.

Members were informed that despite the number of injuries in accidental dwelling fires reducing from last year, unfortunately there had been 12 fatalities in accidental dwelling fires during the period April to December 2015.

With regards to sickness absence, Members were informed that the new HR/ absence information management system does not have any historical data inputted at present. However, if the current trend continues, sickness absence should be under target.

In relation to the number of fire fatalities, Members were informed of debates around funding cuts to the fire and rescue service and whether these cuts are directly contributing to the increase in fire deaths. Members were advised that the view of Officers is that this increase is due to cuts across the wider public sector not just the Fire & Rescue Authority, which are resulting in increased deprivation and vulnerability.

Questions were raised regarding the hospital discharge procedure, and particularly the sharing of information concerning vulnerable people released from hospital reliant on home oxygen.

Members were informed that such information is provided, however work is currently underway to further improve communication regarding hospital discharges.

Further questions were raised around sickness absence and whether the use of self-rostering has contributed to the reduction.

Members were advised that there has been a reduction in sickness absence across the service although self rostering has assisted in reducing sickness absence, alongside the suite of new Policies and supportive approach by Occupational Health. Members were informed that a full report will be brought back to the Committee for scrutiny, highlighting the range of factors responsible for the reduction.

Members Resolved that:

- a) Performance against the objectives and the performance targets/ outcomes as set out in the Service Delivery Plan 2015/16 for the period April 2015 to December 2015, be noted.
- b) A report be brought back to the Committee, highlighting the factors that have been instrumental in reducing sickness absence figures.

4. Youth Engagement Update

Members considered Report CFO/024/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning the work of the Authority in relation to its engagement with young people through the delivery of a number of outcomes focused Youth Engagement Programmes.

Members were provided with a presentation in support of this report, providing a flavour of the Youth Engagement programmes delivered by the Youth Engagement Department on behalf of the Authority.

The presentation provided Members with an overview of its flagship Princes' Trust (TEAM) Programme, which has been delivered by the Authority since 2002; and which targets young people classed as Not In Education or Training (NEET).

Members were informed that the Princes' Trust Programme is currently delivered across Merseyside in partnership with the City of Liverpool College and Wirral Metropolitan College.

The presentation highlighted participation and retention rates, and positive outcomes achieved by participants on Princes' Trust Programmes delivered by MFRA, which are significantly higher than national average figures.

In addition, Members were advised that initial talks are currently underway with Knowsley College and One Ark (Knowsley Housing Trust), regarding the potential delivery of additional teams in the future.

Members were informed that governance for the Street Intervention Team had recently transferred to the Youth Engagement Department. Funding for the team for 2016/17 has now been secured through City Safe; however there will be some changes regarding deployment of the team, to enable them to work more efficiently.

The presentation went on to detail the Fire Cadets scheme, which is aimed at young people aged 13 to 18. Members were informed that previously, many fire and rescue services ran their own programmes, which were all slightly different. However, the Fire Cadets Programme is now a nationally recognised programme, with a national brand, funded by Youth United.

A Fire Cadet Board has been established, to which 32 fire and rescue services are affiliated. The Board meet on a quarterly basis to share best practice. Information was provided to Members regarding the objectives of the Fire Cadets Programme and plans to expand it across Merseyside.

Questions were raised regarding the areas within which youth engagement programmes are delivered.

Members were informed that the Authority endeavours to ensure programmes are delivered to all areas across Merseyside, however the Authority is often bound by external funders, who will stipulate where resources are to be focused. In addition, it is important to ensure that resources are not being duplicated in areas where other delivery partners may be focusing, as this can have a negative impact on retention rates.

Members were advised that should there be potential for additional programmes to be supported in areas where gaps in provision are identified, these opportunities would be fully embraced.

Members Resolved that:

The investment in prevention work to deliver bespoke programmes across Merseyside, to enable our children and young people to flourish and live healthy and productive lives, be noted.

5. Mobilisation Process And The Role of Fire Control

Members considered Report CFO/023/16 of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, concerning a review of performance of Fire Control and their part in the mobilisation of resources to emergency incidents.

Members were provided with a presentation in support of the report, which outlined the legislative requirements for Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Authority's Fire Control establishment; and the mobilising system and mobilising arrangements.

With regards to legislative requirements, the presentation detailed the requirements as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004; the "Code of Practice for Public Emergency Call Services (PECS), between communications providers, call handling agencies and emergency authorities; and the Fire and Rescue Service National Operational Guidance.

The presentation provided an overview of the current Fire Control establishment, the system of work and shift times; and minimum staffing levels.

Members were also provided with an overview of the mobilising system, which detailed the Integrated Communication and Control System, station end equipment, mobile data terminals and airwave radios.

Information was then provided to Members regarding the mobilisation arrangements, including the use of incidents types, pre-determined attendance and action plans, to ensure that incidents are allocated the correct resources and that safe systems of work are in place.

Members expressed their thanks for the presentation.

Members Resolved that:

The current performance of Fire Control in relation to its call handling and dispatch capabilities, be noted.

6. Standing Item: Forward Work Plan

Members considered the Forward Work Plan for the Performance & Scrutiny Committee for 2015/16 and reviewed the outstanding scrutiny review items.

With regards to the scrutiny review concerning the effectiveness of our Consultation Process; Members were informed that this had been on hold, pending the outcome of an Internal Audit review. However it was hoped that Officers would be in a position to bring this item back to the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were informed that following a recent request by Members, Officers may be in a position to bring a report to the next meeting of the Committee concerning the Emergency Medical Response Trial, subject to sufficient information/ data being available.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of inviting representatives of partner agencies to future meetings to provide input to the Committee. Members were informed that they would look into this.

Members Resolved that:

- a) The following items be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 19th May 2016:
 - How effective is our Consultation Process? (subject to available information)
 - Implementation of new HR Policies
 - Environmental Performance
 - Review of the Emergency Medical Response Trial (subject to available information)

- b) Officers look into the possibility of inviting representatives from partner agencies to attend future meetings of the Committee to provide input.

Close

Date of next meeting Thursday, 19 May 2016

Signed: _____

Date: _____