

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held
in the Fire Authority Rooms, Fire and Rescue
Service Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston
Mere, Sunderland on MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER
2015 at 10.30am

Present:

Councillor N. Forbes in the Chair

Councillors Lauchlan, Harrison and Renton.

Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillor Perry.

Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

5. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 6 July 2015 (circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Implementation Report Update for the Risk Based Attendance Policy for Automatic Fire Alarm Calls in Non-Residential Premises

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to update Members on the Risk Based Attendance Policy which went live on 1st June 2015.

ACFO Lowther advised Members that the number of false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms from non-domestic premises between June and September had reduced by 372 when compared to the same period of the previous year, with a reduction of 346 between 0800-1800.

From June to September, there were 336 fire alarm calls which received no mobilisation following the application of the policy's new call challenge procedure. The Chief Fire Officer explained that these calls were challenged prior to a decision being made.

Current performance indicated that premises had improved the management of their fire alarm system outside of 0800 –1800 hours due to the introduction of this policy. No complaints had been received.

Councillor Renton queried the reduction in responses compared to project expenditure of £5,000, and was advised that although staff time has been saved by not attending these incidents (more efficient use of resources), staff time was then used elsewhere and as such no cashable saving was made.

6. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) Further reports be received as appropriate.

Assessment and Improvement Plan Update

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report to update Members regarding the progress made against the Assessment and Improvement Plan over the last twelve months.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that good progress had been made against the Improvement Plan. Following the Operational Assessment in October 2014, several recommendations were received and considered and had now been added to the Improvement Plan for action. Responsibilities had been assigned and target completion dates were currently being agreed.

ACFO Brindle explained the contents of the Assessment Plan, drawing the attention of Members to the following:

- The Annual Audit Letter would be submitted to the November meeting of the Authority;
- An internal audit programme was in place and planned audits were being undertaken;
- The Annual Governance Review was presented to the Governance Committee in June;
- A re-accreditation visit had taken place the previous week for ISO 22301 Business Continuity. The final report was awaited and would be shared with Members in due course;
- Investors in People would be undertaken again in February 2017;
- An Equality Peer Review would be undertaken in March 2016;
- The ROSPA Award was achieved again this year.

Members acknowledged that the Authority had performed extremely well in relation to assessments.

With regards to the Improvement Plan, ACFO Brindle explained that:

- The review of the Standing Orders had now been completed and would be submitted to the November Meeting of the Authority, for approval; and

- Work was underway to explore the use of volunteers as part of the longer term community safety strategy.

Councillor Harrison questioned how the efficiency challenges were linked to the improvement plan and was advised that they were currently linked via external audit whereby an assessment was made on both the Authority's financial resilience and also the use of resources.

The Chairman commented that the Authority was aware of the difficult times ahead, and welcomed the processes outlined within the report, as they ensured that the Authority was challenging itself.

In response to a question from the Chairman in relation to the inclusion of Stonewall, ACFO Brindle confirmed that this could also be included.

7. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) Further Improvement Plan progress reports be received annually.

End of Quarter 2 (April – September) Performance Report 2015/16

The Chief Fire Officer submitted a report providing the Quarter 2 (April – September) performance of the Authority against the targets for 2015/16.

Members were advised that the report had been structured to demonstrate the Authority's performance in relation to key performance indicators reflecting organisational priorities. The full suite of performance indicators was appended to the report.

ACFO Brindle and AM Pratt delivered a presentation to the committee. Members were advised that overall there had been by the end of Quarter Two 2015/16:

- 4% (12) fewer Accidental Dwelling Fires
- 20.7% (6) fewer Injuries from Accidental Dwelling Fires
- 18.7% (26) fewer Malicious False Alarms Attended
- 28.4% (374) fewer NON DOMESTIC Automatic False Alarms Attended
- 11% (145) fewer DOMESTIC Automatic False Alarms Attended

However, the Service had also experienced:

- 14.1% (250) more Deliberate Secondary Fires
- 15.4% (317) more Deliberate Fires
- 15.6% (450) more All Fire Calls Attended
- 6.5% (53) more Primary Fires
- 4.6% (45) more Special Services

The attention of Members was then drawn to the following information:

The Service was not at the current time, expecting to meet its target in relation to primary fires.

The Service had also attended 253 primary fires involving road vehicles, which was an increase of 28 incidents from the same period last year. This was being closely monitored.

Examples were given of some of the types of primary fires which had occurred in the previous quarter.

Due to the increase in the number of deliberate secondary fires, it was anticipated that the target set for the year would not be achieved. It was noted that the increase had occurred in quarter 1, with quarter 2 showing a more usual pattern of incidents. The committee noted the contribution which is made by local authorities to preventing deliberate fires, through the removal of loose refuse.

Councillor Harrison also suggested that discussions take place with landlords to help alleviate rubbish problems surrounding rented properties.

A total of 941 incidents in relation to False Alarm Calls due to Automatic Fire Alarms from Non-Domestic Premises had been seen during Quarter 2 which was a reduction of 374 from the previous year (28.4%). Due to the introduction of the new policy, it was anticipated that the target would be met by the end of the year and it was pleasing to note the positive impact of the policy across Tyne and Wear.

In response to a question from Councillor Harrison relating to the mean average, ACFO Brindle agreed to circulate this information.

With regards to Home Safety Checks, Members were advised that in collaboration with partners, 19,583 Home Safety Checks had been undertaken during Quarter 2. This being an increase of 518 in comparison to the same period last year. TWFRS had carried out 16,770 of these, and partners, delivered a total of 2,813. Relationships were therefore being developed where possible, with for example, housing companies for a collaborative approach.

8. RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (ii) Approval be given to the publication of the Quarter 2 Performance Report.

(Signed) N. FORBES
Chairman