

MEETING: 19 JANUARY 2009

SUBJECT: PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members in respect of the main partnerships undertaken by this Authority.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that one of the Authority's improvement objectives detailed in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan was to ensure that all partnerships are relevant, attended by the appropriate person(s) and support the Authority's vision.
- 2.2 Since the original Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan was introduced, considerable work has been carried out to ensure that the required changes are implemented and that the Authority's partnerships are operating effectively.

3 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 3.1 Fundamental to this process has been the Authority's Partnership Policy document, which is now firmly established and is used as a reference point for all those working with partnerships. The Partnership Policy is available on the Service's web site and the risk assessments undertaken as part of the policy are available on the intranet.
- 3.2 In total, the Authority has 15 partnership arrangements with external organisations and a full list can be found attached as appendix A.
- 3.3 Overall, there has been significant progress in respect of the work of the partnerships and key examples are highlighted below for the information of Members.

4 LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIPS

- 4.1 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service have a representative on all five of the local strategic partnerships. We are a statutory partner on all five crime and disorder reduction partnerships.
- 4.2 These arrangements aim to make a positive contribution to the quality of life of the community of Tyne and Wear, and in part, help discharge the Authority's forthcoming responsibilities under the CAA inspection programme.

- 4.3 One typical example of this partnership work is the joint venture between the Service and South Tyneside homes with the objective of increasing the number of working smoke alarms in homes in South Tyneside. The provision of smoke alarms has contributed to a decrease in the number of fires in houses in South Tyneside (25%), all the fires that have occurred have been contained within the room of origin and the cost of fire damage to homes has been recorded as £14k as compared with £59k for the same time period the previous year, before this initiative was undertaken. These costs have been supplied by South Tyneside Homes.
- 4.4 A similar initiative has been set up with Your Homes Newcastle and the potential to expand into other local authority areas is being explored.
- 4.5 As stated in the draft IRMP Annual Action Plan for 2009/2010, the current working arrangements within the local authority partnerships are scheduled to be re-evaluated in order to ascertain whether there are further improvements that can be made.

5 PHOENIX PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The purpose of the Phoenix programme is to change the attitudes and responsibilities of young people and increase the life skills of the individuals involved in the programme by using the fire service as a positive role model. The Service operates two Phoenix programmes, one in Sunderland and the second in Newcastle.
- 5.2 In Sunderland the Phoenix course continues to have a positive impact, which is clearly demonstrated by the figures produced by Newcastle University. These indicate that over 93% (116) have successfully completed the four day course and 98%, (182), have completed the one day course this year. Furthermore, the data also shows that 44% of the attendees have not re-offended after the course, whilst a further 37% are offending at a slower rate than prior to the course. Data in respect of re-offending rates is not yet available.
- 5.3 The Newcastle Phoenix course has not had the same impact as its sister course in Sunderland primarily due to funding difficulties. Nevertheless the statistics are still impressive with over 75% (72) of individuals have fully completed the week long course.
- 5.4 Additionally, Newcastle Phoenix run the FLAME course which has been developed to increase contact between TWFRS (Newcastle west district) and the hard to reach BME communities. The idea was to promote fire safety awareness within such communities, to increase positive contact and the raise the awareness of the fire service as a career. The students who attended were aged between 13 and 17 years old and on successful completion of the course, were awarded a Fire Leader certificate along with a work experience certificate.

6 SAINSBURYS

- 6.1 The partnership with Sainsbury's, which commenced in November 2007, has already achieved success by delivering tangible benefits to both organisations, with Sainsbury plc removing traditional chip pans from over 1000 stores and committing not to reintroduce them in the future.
- 6.2 A key feature of this partnership is the alignment with the Government's 'Better Regulation' agenda, authored by the current chair of Sainsbury's, Sir Philip Hampton. This partnership has been developed from the outset to support central government thinking in respect of regulatory fire safety matters and involves fire safety officers interacting with Sainsbury's relevant fire safety officers to provide a strategic level framework for effective enforcement in Sainsbury premises.
- 6.3 The template for this partnership has been discussed at national level and is likely to be agreed by CFOA and BRC (British Retail Consortium) as the basis for working arrangements between partners. Notable success has been achieved in this partnership and there is undoubtedly further capacity for developments within the Protection and Technical arena.

7 PRINCES TRUST

- 7.1 The Princes Trust is a UK charity that helps young people overcome barriers and get their lives working. Through practical support including training, mentoring and financial assistance, they help 14-30 year olds realise their potential and transform their lives. They focus their efforts on those who have had difficulties at school, in care, suffer from behavioural problems, or are long-term unemployed. Recently a City and Guilds qualification has been attached to the team programme which will improve the young person's chances of finding work and will underpin the Government's commitment to every child matters.
- 7.2 At a local level the Partnership has secured European Social Funding, which has allowed the Authority to increase the number of courses from three to six per year, with the addition of three courses in Newcastle. This has not only benefited the young people of Newcastle but will assist the local community. The Sunderland team has completed 19 teams, assisting over 150 young people to date, and has resulted in many individual success stories.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The majority of partnerships only involve predominately officer's time which is offset by the partner's contribution or by some other mutually acceptable method.

10.2 The Newcastle Princes trust is self funding and the Sunderland team are moving towards that point. Newcastle and Sunderland Phoenix work on a matched funding basis.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 All partnerships are risk assessed therefore there are no significant risk management implications.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) endorse the benefits and contribution these partnerships make to the community safety agenda, and
- b) receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The undermentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document 2008-2011

South Tyneside LSP

Gateshead LSP

North Tyneside LSP

Safer Sunderland Partnership Strategic Board

Safe Newcastle +Partnership Board

Phoenix Project – Newcastle

Phoenix Project - Sunderland

The Princes Trust

Gateshead Community Safety Partnership - Responsible Authority Group

North Tyneside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Regional Project Management Group - Learning and Development

Safer Sunderland Business Support Group

South Tyneside Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Union Learning Fund for the North East Fire Services

J Sainsbury