



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 8 JULY 2019 at 10.30 am

Present:

Councillor Forbes in the Chair.

Councillors Dodds, Pickard and Samuels.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Duggan and Purvis and also ACFO Baines and Robson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Committee held on 11 February 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2018/2019 End of Year Performance Report

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide the Committee with information relating to Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service's performance for the End of Year 2018/2019.

Area Manager (AM) John Pratt and AM Phil Clark drew the attention of Members to the following statistics within TWFRS:

Deaths

- There had been 5 fire fatalities during 2018/2019 (1 in Newcastle, 1 in North Tyneside and 3 in Sunderland)
- Three dwelling fires fatalities had been confirmed by the Coroner as accidental fire deaths
- One dwelling fire fatality and one fire fatality in an outdoor structure was awaiting the outcome of the Coroner's Inquest
- In two of the fatalities, death was a result of smoke inhalation in a property with either no smoke alarm or no working smoking alarm
- In 55% of cases, it was suspected that drug or alcohol use had also been a contributing factor

The Committee commented that targeted work needed to be undertaken with homeowners who did not have a fire alarm and also that the service needed to continue to raise awareness via campaigns about the effect of drug and alcohol use on house fires.

Injuries

- There had been an increase of 10 injuries from accidental dwelling fires
- There had been a 4% decrease in the number of injuries from all fires
- In 74% of injuries from accidental dwelling fires the room of origin of the fire was the kitchen
- 30% of victims who spent time in hospital were over 60
- 55% were either "Lone Person or Single Parent"

Members were advised that as a result of this, the Home Safety Check (HSC) strategy would be revisited.

Fire Attendances

- There had been a 3% increase in accidental dwelling fires.

Members were advised that 55% required no fire fighter action or were extinguished by small means.

- There had been a 3% reduction in accidental kitchen fires
- There had been a 2% increase in deliberate secondary fires

Members heard that despite a very small increase, the 'Usual Suspects' Campaign had been hugely successful.

- There had been a 5% reduction in deliberate refuse fires. This had largely been due to 'uplift schemes' within local authorities.
- 40% of primary fires had a property type of 'Road Vehicle', which was an increase of 11%. Work was therefore ongoing with Northumbria Police.

In addition to 'uplift schemes and the 'Usual Suspects Campaign, fire safety advice had been given, Cadets had also delivered leaflets which had been very well received and crews had engaged with schools to educate students.

Councillor Samuels welcomed this and expressed her concerns that this level of intervention may be difficult to sustain given the levels of cuts the Authority was faced with year on year.

False Alarms

- There had been a 2% reduction in AFAs in both domestic and non-domestic premises
- 33% of AFAs to non-domestic premises were due to faulty alarms
- 22% of non-domestic AFAs were to education premises
- 19% of non-domestic premises AFAs were from premises type 'Hospitals and Medical Care'
- 33% of false alarms in domestic premises were to 'self-contained sheltered housing'

The Committee referred to the number of false alarms to non-domestic premises which were due to faulty alarms and commented that owners needed to take responsibility for their own property and ensure that alarms were in working order.

Members welcomed the fact that the Service aimed to work with these people however commented that failure to comply and repeated attendances as a result of this, may need to result in enforcement in the future. It was agreed that this would be considered again, at the next meeting.

Councillor Pickard also expressed his concerns that that false alarms had a tendency to desensitise people and stop them responding to fire alarms.

Members were advised that the change in attendance policy had seen a reduction in the number of non-domestic false alarms to education and hospital settings.

The Committee was then referred to the data on the priority indicators and noted that of the 18 indicators, it was forecasted that 6 targets would be attained.

The Chairman expressed his concerns last year half of the targets were forecasted not to be achieved and the year before a third, and commented that consideration needed to be given to revising targets and also how they were analysed.

2. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the contents of the report be noted and endorsed; and
- (ii) further reports be received as necessary.

A draft revised performance report was circulated for consideration by Members and comments were welcomed.

AM Pratt explained that whilst the report was still in the developmental stage, efficiencies would be made in the way in which data was collected and presented.

The Chairman commented that it would be useful to analyse trends over time as opposed to looking at figures in isolation and also that information in relation to context would be beneficial to compare Tyne and Wear against other Fire and Rescue Services.

Councillor Dodds referred to the findings of the recent HMICFRS Inspection in particular, the view that fire prevention could be improved and commented that the volume of prevention could be increased if activities elsewhere within the service were reduced and suggested that the impact of this would need to be analysed.

Incident Response Standards - Pilot Update

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide Members with an update regarding the pilot of incident response standards with effect from April 2019, as approved in December 2018.

Members were advised at the time of publication, the report included figures prior to the end of Quarter 1 i.e. 25 June 2019. An addendum to the report was therefore tabled which included information to the end of Quarter 1 i.e. 30 June 2019.

Members were reminded that it was the aspiration of the Service to respond to emergency incidents as quickly as possible, prioritising the response to incidents where there was significant risk to life and property.

The Committee was referred to Section 3.3. of the report which showed that performance against the draft response standards was generally good. Further analysis on the average time to despatch resources to emergency incidents had identified that the extensive call handling process to ensure the Service effectively allocated the correct resources for the incident type therefore ensuring the appropriate weight of initial response. Detailed monitoring and analysis would continue throughout the pilot.

The Chairman questioned whether it was common for numerous people to ring in response to the same incident and was advised that yes, this was often the case.

In addition to this, when referring to the time to dispatch resources to emergency incidents, consideration also needed to be given to the fact that the control room need to ensure that the call did not relate to a false alarm, which in turn, took slightly longer.

Members were extremely pleased to note that the targets for both the first fire engine to arrive within 6 minutes and the second fire engine to arrive within 8 minutes, to risk level one incidents were both exceeded.

3. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) further reports be received as necessary.

(Signed) N FORBES
Chair

