

COMMUNITY SAFETY & CORPORATE PLANNING COMMITTEE
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

4 July 2016

Present:-

Councillors Eastman, Bown, Colthorpe, Ellery, Hill, Leaves and Dyke (sub Redman)

CSCPC/1 Election of Chair*

RESOLVED that Councillor Eastman be elected Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in May 2017.

CSCPC/2 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 14 April 2016*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016 be signed as a correct record.

CSCPC/3 Election of Vice Chair*

RESOLVED that Councillor Leaves be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in May 2017.

CSCPC/4 Community Safety Strategy – Review*

The Committee received for information a presentation given by the Area Manager (Community Safety) that set out the progress made to date with the review of the Community Safety Strategy.

The main drivers for the review were:

- Changing political/organisational priorities
- Partnership links
- Review outcomes – consistency & efficiency
- Current levels of delivery
- Greater targeting and matching resources to risk

The new strategy was being developed using a risk based approach, taking into account Partnership expectations and the potential for added value to the Service provision. This would allow the Service to prioritise and target its resources accordingly. It was anticipated that a full report on the outcome of the review would be available in October 2016.

Reference was made at this point to the role of a Firefighter in the 21st century which was the subject of discussion nationally. It was felt that the role of a firefighter had changed substantially over the years and was now more akin to a Public Safety Officer. The Committee felt that this and the wider community safety agenda needed to be communicated to the public so that there was a greater understanding of the service that they could expect in the future given the decrease in the number of fires over the last 40 years. It was suggested that one of the ways in which this communication could be achieved was via the Parish Council meetings, where officers could attend to give an overview of their role and current service delivery mechanisms. The view was expressed that Fire Authority members also had a role to play here in taking out the Service's strategy and objectives for the future. The Area Manager (Community Safety) advised the Committee that Group Commanders had already been asked to make contact with their local Fire Authority members. Councillor Ellery volunteered to be involved with the discussions in respect of the community safety strategy and the Area Manager (Community Safety) undertook to make contact with him in due course.

CSCPC/5 Home Fire Safety Visits – Update*

The Committee received for information an update given by the Area Manager (Community Safety) that set out the outcome the pilot that had been undertaken by the Service in respect of Home Fire Safety Visits.

The Area Manager (Community Safety) reported that the outcomes of the review covered the clear benefits that had been established as a result of the approach taken, such as improved quality, effective targeting, reduced training and an increase in the number of visits undertaken.

The Committee commended the work undertaken on this pilot but expressed concern that there had not been a report submitted setting out the progress made for reference. In particular, further information was requested in respect of the anticipated savings that would be generated as a result of the pilot. The Area Manager (Community Safety) reported that the costs of community safety activity as a whole had been contained within existing budget of £0.5 million to date and it was therefore difficult to unravel the costs specifically for Home Fire Safety Visits. He added that, following the pilot, the costs were more readily identifiable and that he would provide this information for the Committee separately.

Reference was made to the point that the Service was working with other local authorities to glean information that could be used to inform the risk based approach to enable more targeted use of resources. This work was being pulled into the Community Safety Strategy that was currently being prepared and it was suggested that this information should be shared with the Authority at a Members' Forum in due course.

The Committee expressed its thanks to SM George Setter in particular at this point for the work that he had undertaken in respect of the pilot on the Home Fire Safety Visits.

NB. Minute CSCPC/16/4 above also refers.*

CSCPC/6**Work with Syrian Refugees***

The Committee received for information an update given by the Area Manager (Community Safety) in respect of the progress made to date with the work undertaken with Syrian refugees in Somerset. He advised the Committee that there were approximately 12 families who had been settled into the Somerset area and who had integrated well. There was a further 12 families due to be settled in Somerset and the Fire Service was working closely with the local authority to assist with issues such as fire safety advice.

Reference was made to the point that since the vote on the exit from the European Union, there had been a number of reports of racist attacks on people from minority ethnic communities. Councillor Ellery stated that Torbay Council had asked its councillors to gather any information and to work with the Police Community Support Officers if they should be advised of any incidents in their local ward.

CSCPC/7**Police and Fire Community Safety Officer (PFCSO) - Pilot Evaluation***

The Committee received for information a presentation given by the Area Manager (Community Safety) that set out the progress made in respect of the pilot for Police and Fire Community Support Officers that had been undertaken in North Devon and had been ongoing since November 2015.

It was noted that this pilot had demonstrated the benefits of working together with the Police with 6 officers employed to work 42 hours per week. The benefits seen to date had included the ability to have officers in place in an area where the recruitment of On Call staff had been difficult, the availability of good skill sets, a visible presence in the area and a source of intelligence. The pilot had also enabled the ability for the Service to keep pumps available for call out when needed.

Whilst the Pilot was not intended to make direct savings, it would inevitably generate efficiencies from which the Service would benefit. The question of efficiencies was raised as it had been reported elsewhere within the Service that there may be some savings made as a result of the PFCSO pilot and the Area Manager (Community Safety) undertook to check the position and report back separately on this matter.

CSCPC/8**Data Led Approach to Business Safety***

The Committee received for information a presentation given by the Area Manager (Community Safety) in respect of the data led approach being undertaken by the Service to community safety.

The Area Manager (Community Safety) explained that this project was linked to the Home Fire Safety Pilot. He indicated that the main aim was to link resources to risk and he referred to the four main strands of data that were being utilised which included:

- Incident data;
- Inspections such as fire safety audits;
- Operational risk data;
- External data.

The Committee noted that the Service had been working closely with Experion and with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to look in particular at the data surrounding accidental fires. A model had been developed by Experion which involved a “mega file” of all of the businesses in the United Kingdom which had enabled the classification of these premises according to risk. In Devon and Somerset, this had resulted in the classification of a high number of business premises as high risk and when combined with other existing data sets, would facilitate the prioritisation of resources.

Reference was made at this point to the issue of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs) which could be a fire risk for the Service. Councillor Ellery reported that there had been 15 prosecutions in the Torbay area recently involving HIMOs and he suggested an approach involving a Fire Officer being warranted and upskilled to deal with this in partnership with the local Housing Authority to try to improve public safety. The Area Manager (Community Safety) advised that work was being initiated by the Service to initiate a database of premises for the Service to visit and a strategy was being identified. It was acknowledged that HIMOs was a priority in terms of community safety and the Area Manager (Community Safety) undertook to look into the action that could be taken and to discuss this matter further with Councillor Ellery.

NB. Minute CSCPC/16/5 above also refers.*

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 10:00hours and finished at 12.20hours