



Minutes

Community Safety Committee

Date: 30 April 2021

Time: 10:30

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillors G Almas (in the chair), L Cunningham (for agenda items 1 – 8 only, Min nos. 33 – 40 refer), R Downes (as substitute for Councillor C Burke), P Harrand, R Hunt, D Jenkins, D Kirton, M Pervaiz, M Pollard, K Renshaw and A Tait

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Councillor C Burke

33 Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 January 2021

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 15 January 2021 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

34 Matters arising

None

35 Urgent items

None

36 Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

37 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest made in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

38 Arson Convictions 2020 – 21

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Delivery which provided details of the arson convictions 2020 – 21 where West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Investigation Team had provided expert witness statements to the Crown Prosecution Service.

It was reported that there were a total of 22 individuals who had been charged with arson as detailed in the annex to the report now submitted and Members were advised that a number of other cases were still ongoing.

The following issues were discussed;

- Possible preventative measures in situations where trees, for example, posed an attraction to arsonists – operational crews were aware of areas of repeated offences and worked closely with community safety partners to mitigate anti-social behaviour
- Reduction in incidents at Wetherby Young Offenders Institution – due to robust management and a change of approach by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police insofar as offenders were now charged and faced possible extended time in prison
- Possible recompense from known arsonists for time and resources spent on tackling fires set by them – no financial recompense was possible although some form of restorative justice was being introduced by the Courts
- ISO 17020 (International Standards Organisation) accreditation whereby joint training with North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Humberside Fire and Rescue Services assure Fire Investigation Officers to ensure evidence continued to comply with police forensic requirements, and
- Delay in cases coming before the Courts – due either to investigations not being completed to date or awaiting decision regarding prosecution from the police and CPS

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

39 Fire Safety update

The Director of Service Delivery gave a verbal update on fire safety which advised of the progress to date with the Fire Safety Bill which had received Royal Assent on 30 April.

Members were advised that the Bill gave further clarification, amongst other things, of what was defined as an external wall and it was anticipated that the Bill would lead to increased fire safety enforcement.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

40 Safeguarding – activity update

Members received a report of the Director of Service Delivery which advised of the safeguarding activity undertaken in 2020 when 95 individual cases generated a cause for concern.

It was reported that various courses of action had been taken dependent upon the category of concern and that the total figure represented a 43% decrease over the previous year. Members were advised that this was likely to have been due to a reduction in Safe and Well (face to face) visits due to the COVID19 pandemic and the majority of those identified in 2020 resulted from attendance at incidents or accidental false alarm calls.

It was anticipated that, whilst Safe and Well visits continued for those identified as high risk, they would recommence in May 2021 for medium-risk occupants and, dependent upon the Government's roadmap, a return to normal ways of working was anticipated from June.

Members commented on the following;

- Apparent disparity of figures between the five districts
- Issue of "consent" and "capacity", and
- Officer training

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

41 District Priorities 2021 – 22

Members were invited to approve the District Priorities for 2020 – 21 which set out the strategic objectives and actions for each District in support of the approved Your Fire and Rescue Service Priorities document. It was reported that these were currently in draft form pending the inclusion of updated figures related to both the performance chart and some clarification of terminology.

The Priorities documents, to be updated on an annual basis, had been substantially revised from previous editions and now linked more closely with the Brigade's strategic priorities and service plan with some new elements including the inclusion of risks and risk management.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the inclusion of updated performance figures, the District Priorities 2021 – 22 be approved.

42 Fire Protection – risk-based inspection programme

The Director of Service Delivery submitted a report which introduced the Risk-based Inspection Programme 2021 – 22, a requirement of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services.

The programme enabled West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to determine the fire protection risks within West Yorkshire and to utilise resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible in order to continue to fulfil statutory duties.

It was reported that some changes had been made at a national level regarding the treatment of high-rise buildings and also to the re-inspection of premises which had been included in the document now submitted for approval.

Members sought clarification on the following;

- Potential increased burden on building owners subsequent upon a new revised audit process and increased autonomy for Fire Services to make inspections

RESOLVED

That the Risk-based Inspection Programme 2021 – 22 be approved.

Chair