



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD held on Tuesday, 28 March 2017 at P O Conference Room - Fire Service Headquarters, Winsford, Cheshire at 10.00 am

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor J Weatherill

Auditors:

Michael Nulty, Mersey Internal Audit Agency

Officers:

Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mark Cashin (Chair)
Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Andrew Leadbetter
Head of Finance, Wendy Bebbington
Governance, Risk and Audit Officer, Christine Astall
Planning, Performance and Risk Manager, Louise Willis

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Councillor S Nelson
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Paul Hancock
External Auditor – Grant Thornton, Perminder Sethi

2 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes from the previous meeting on 18th October 2016 were presented to the Risk Management Board and several matters were discussed.

The Chair queried whether workshops had taken place on Early Warning Indicators (EWIs). The Governance, Risk and Audit Officer confirmed that workshops had taken place for the relevant members of staff, but that a workshop needed to be scheduled for Members.

The Chair informed the Board that a business continuity exercise had been scheduled for May 2017.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE - RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD

A revised Terms of Reference was presented to the Board for approval. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that the revisions included the removal of references to Policy Committee and an updated membership list.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the revised Terms of Reference be approved.

4 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Board discussed the Strategic Risk Register provided. The following observations were made:

376 – Fire in Iconic Heritage Buildings

The Chair informed the Board that the Service was still working towards the target rating for this risk, but that it was likely to remain over target unless a sizeable financial investment was made by building owners in Fire Protection measures.

807 – Competing Demands on the Organisations Resources due to Changing External Environment

The Head of Finance informed the Board that the current rating for this risk was fair due to uncertainty surrounding the Government's financial plans and was unlikely to reduce.

943 – Managing Resource Capacity through Transition of Blue Light Collaboration

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the Board that the significant workload associated with the creation of the Multi-Force Shared Service (MFSS) and the loss of two key members of staff from the Service had lead to the current rating remaining high for this risk.

TBC (new) – IRMP Impact of Crewe/Ellesmere Port On Call Review

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Board that this risk had been added to the register due to the financial implications associated with it. He advised that the scope of the review would be agreed by Members at the meeting of the Fire Authority in April and a final decision made at the Authority's September meeting. The Chair informed the Board that the current rating for this risk reflected the potential impact on reserves if changes to the review went ahead.

Risks scored on and below the threshold of the Strategic Risk Register were also submitted to Board for review. The following observations were made:

192 – Loss of Key Staff and Accumulated Knowledge due to Resignation or Long Term Absence

The Board agreed that this risk could be covered within risk 807 on the strategic risk register and could be closed.

722 – Impact of Government Austerity Measures

The Board agreed that this risk could be covered within risk 807 on the strategic risk register and could be closed.

769 – Systems Failing to Support Service Delivery

The Chair advised that the current rating for this risk now needed reviewing and was likely to reduce due to improvements to service levels.

801 – Claims from Historic Insurable Events

The Chair informed the Board that this risk would begin to reduce over the next few decades as those effected by exposure to asbestos, prior to the introduction of the personal protective equipment policy, reach retirement age. He informed the Board that he would check with Operational Policy and Assurance when the policy was implemented.

862 – Crewe and Ellesmere Port On Call Recruitment

The Board agreed that this risk was covered by the new risk on the strategic risk register 'IRMP Impact of Crewe/Ellesmere Port On Call Review'

889 – Lack of Commitment from Housing Providers to Fit Sprinklers

The Chair informed the Board that this risk was managed by the Sprinkler Group and that a paper was due to go to the Fire Authority in due course to update Members on ideas for utilising funding for the installation of sprinklers.

961 – MFSS Go Live

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed the Board that this risk was now closed and a new risk had been created for the next stage of the programme.

970 – ESMCP

The Head of Finance informed the Board that she had a meeting scheduled concerning the next stages of the programme with officers from the Service to discuss the project from both fire and police perspectives. She also highlighted that the financial implications for the Service should the Airwave contract need extending beyond 2020 remained the greatest risk to the programme.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services suggested that the Strategic Risk Register be reviewed to incorporate the relevant departmental risks where appropriate.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the Strategic Risk Register be reviewed to incorporate the relevant departmental risks where appropriate (AL/CA).**

5 ALARM/CIPFA RISK MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING EXERCISE 2016

The Governance, Risk and Audit Officer introduced the report which provided an update on the outcomes of the risk management benchmarking exercise undertaken

in 2016.

She informed the Board that the Service had continued to sustain the highest performance level of 'Driving' for its corporate risk management arrangements. Meetings were to be scheduled with the Service's risk champions to learn from other councils and services who performed well to further the Service's own improvement.

The Chair drew the Board's attention to the section of the report concerning partnerships and asked whether any councils or services scored particularly highly within this section. The Governance, Risk and Audit Officer confirmed that St Helens Council scored highly and that the Service would be in contact with them to discuss their arrangements for managing risks with partners. She also confirmed that work was being undertaken by the Prevention team to refresh the Service's partnership framework.

The Head of Finance queried concerns over the difficulty of defining partnerships. The Governance, Risk and Audit Officer informed the Board that Partnerships sat within the remit of the Prevention department and that there was difficulty capturing those that fell outside of the department. The Auditor from Mersey Internal Audit Agency informed the Board that the Quarter 4 audit covered the Service's partnership policy. He also advised the Board that distributing a survey throughout the organisation would provide a strong indicator of familiarity with the policy among employees.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the results of the 2016 self-assessment be noted.

6 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Chair introduced the Work Programme 2017-18 and informed the Board that the next meeting would take place in October and that a review of the crisis management exercise taking place in May 2017 and the resulting learning outcomes would be on the agenda.

The Governance, Risk and Audit Officer queried whether risks below the threshold would be brought back to the Board at its October meeting. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services suggested that once the agreed amends were complete, risks below the threshold for the strategic risk register be taken back to the Board at its meeting in March 2018.

RESOLVED: That

[1] a review of the crisis management exercise, scheduled for May 2017, and the resulting learning outcomes be added to the agenda for 17th October 2017; and

[2] risks falling below the threshold for the strategic risk register be added to the agenda for 13th March 2018.

