

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 4TH SEPTEMBER 2019
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PREVENTION
AUTHOR: MARK SHONE

SUBJECT: SAFETY CENTRAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To present a review of the performance of Safety Central, the Service's safety and lifeskills education centre, during its first two years of operation – from July 2017 to June 2019.

Recommended:

- [1] Members review and consider the information presented in this report.

Background

2. *Our First Two Years Bringing Safety to Life* is the first formal report of Safety Central's performance since it was established in July 2017. Now that the centre is running in 'steady state' the intention is to report annually, with the next report due in September 2020.

Information

3. The report comprises five key sections to give Members a comprehensive overview of activity at Safety Central over the last 24 months: headline performance; programmes and events; partnerships; staffing and volunteering; and plans for the year ahead.
4. The centre welcomed a total of 13,440 visitors between 17th July 2017 and 30th June (the end of Q1) 2019. Of these, 8,064 were children and young people and 1,358 were adults from a total of 317 schools and community groups from Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington boroughs. The remaining visitors comprised group leaders and helpers and stakeholders attending the centre for meetings or training. On the basis of future bookings, visitor numbers are forecast to be more than 9,000 for 2019-20.
5. Visitors who took part in the centre's learning evaluation showed an average improvement of 79% in their basic safety and lifeskills knowledge following a visit. Of the teachers who completed feedback cards, 100% rated their visit as good and very good and 100% would visit again. 93% of children and young people and 98% of adult visitors rated their visited 4 or 5 out of 5.

6. Safety Central is now running four core learning programmes, three aimed at children and young people and one at adult community groups. In addition, more than 20 agencies regularly use the centre for learning events throughout the year.
7. The centre's team has worked with a total of 45 partners over the last two years. These comprise organisations that sponsor the volunteer programme or fund travel costs for disadvantaged groups, provide resources and equipment, attend the centre to help deliver activities or help to develop lesson plans.
8. A total of 6,809 volunteer hours have been logged over the two years with a notional value of £78,933.54. At the end of the reporting period there were 26 volunteer rangers actively engaged with the centre and this has very recently risen to 31. A survey of rangers shows high levels of satisfaction with their volunteering experience.

Financial Implications

9. Safety Central's revenue costs are met from the Prevention Department budget. An annual grant of £10,000 from SP Energy Networks supports the running of the volunteer ranger programme and it is anticipated that this will be available until 2024.

Legal Implications

10. Cheshire Fire Authority has a statutory duty to promote fire safety through the provision of information, advice and publicity. The work at Safety Central clearly furthers other work that the Service carries out within the field.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. Safety Central's facilities and learning programmes were subject to full Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) during the development phase. All lesson plans are underpinned by 'mini EIAs'. A total of 558 children and young people from non-mainstream educational provision visited the centre during the reporting period.

Environmental Implications

12. There are no environmental implications for Members to consider.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: 'OUR FIRST TWO YEARS BRINGING SAFETY TO
LIFE, SEPTEMBER 2019'**