

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 2ND SEPTEMBER 2020
REPORT OF: HEAD OF PREVENTION
AUTHOR: MARK SHONE, SAFETY CENTRAL MANAGER

SUBJECT: SAFETY CENTRAL ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Purpose of Report

1. To present a review of the performance of Safety Central, the Service's safety and lifeskills education centre, between April 1st 2019 and March 31st 2020.

Recommended:

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

Background

2. This is Safety Central's second annual report, the first – presented last September – having covered the centre's first two years between July 2017 and March 2019. This year's first single annual report is produced to a simpler format that will carry forward for future years.

Information

3. The report comprises four key sections to give Members a comprehensive overview of activity at Safety Central over the last 12 months, including: visitor numbers; visitors' learning and experience; performance against objectives for the year; and plans for the year ahead. Two appendices summarise the four education programmes and staffing model, for newer Members less familiar with the centre's work.
4. The centre welcomed a total of 8,773 visitors between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020. This represents an increase of 26% on the previous year. Of these, 3,915 were children and young people and 1,598 were adults from a total of 186 schools and community groups across Cheshire. The remaining visitors comprised group leaders and helpers and stakeholders attending the centre for meetings or training.
5. The total number of visitors would have been 600 higher for the period had the centre not had to suspend all visits from 13th March owing to the Covid-19 (C19) lockdown and subsequent closure of schools. The centre remained

closed for the first quarter of 2020/21, but recommenced a limited programme from 10th August.

6. Visitors who took part in the centre's learning evaluation showed an average improvement of 68% 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. 94% of children and young people and 98% of adult visitors rated their visited 4 or 5 out of 5.
7. Achievements during 2020/21 include: the installation of a new shop scenario donated by the Co-op at the cost of around £35,000; adopting a more targeted approach to attracting schools and groups from areas of need; and launching a new website with live booking calendar and volunteer self-rostering capability.
8. At the end of the reporting period there were 37 volunteer rangers actively engaged with the centre. This year they logged a total of 3,843 volunteer hours have been logged over the two years with a notional value of £38,199.
9. C19 will continue to have an impact on the way the centre operates for some time to come and a phased approach to reopening is set out in the full report. This will affect the team's capability to attract large numbers of visitors in the months ahead, but it should not prevent them working towards a number of objectives aimed at further enhancing the provision of safety and lifeskills education.

Financial Implications

10. 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

11. Cheshire Fire Authority has a statutory duty to promote fire safety. The legislation mentions the provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. 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 481 children and young people from non-mainstream educational provision visited the centre during the reporting period.

Environmental Implications

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

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: 'SAFETY CENTRAL ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20'