



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT BOARD held on Tuesday, 13 October 2020 at 10.00am - Virtual Meeting - Via Skype

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Stef Nelson
Councillor Stuart Parker

Auditor:

Anne-Marie Harrop, Mersey Internal Audit Agency

Officers:

Mark Cashin (Chair), Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Andrew Leadbetter, Director of Governance and Commissioning
Allan Rainford, Treasurer
Neil Griffiths, Head of Service Delivery
Neil McElroy, Group Manager for Operation Policy and Projects
Chris Astall, Performance, Planning and Risk Officer
Emilie Salkeld, Governance Officer

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

Louise Willis, Planning, Performance and Risk Manager

2 NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes from the previous meeting on 17th March 2020 were presented to the Risk Management Board and the following action was noted:-

The Planning, Performance and Risk Officer provided an update on risk 975 – Cyber Security. All policy documents concerned with IT security had been reviewed. She also advised that risk 1021 – Communications at large incidents was awaiting a further update.

Group Manager, Neil McElroy confirmed that the 'battle boxes' referenced in the Annual Crisis Management Plan were located at Clemonds Hey and North West Fire Control.

3 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Planning, Performance and Risk Officer introduced the Risk Register and

provided an update for each risk. The following observations were made:-

376 – Fire in Iconic Heritage Building

The Chair noted that a meeting had occurred with the Chief Executive Office of Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council. He requested that the score of the risk be reviewed in light of the recent actions taken to mitigate the risk following their meeting.

ACTION: That

[1] the Planning and Performance team review the risk score for risk 376.

807 – Competing Demands on Resource and Achieving MTFP Targets

It was noted that there had been no autumn budget and it was uncertain whether fire and rescue services would receive a one or three year settlement. The Treasurer also discussed the impact of Covid-19 on council tax which was an additional risk to future funding.

889 – Lack of Commitment from housing providers to fit sprinklers

The Chair reminded the group that Cheshire had the most high-rise buildings fitted with sprinklers in the country. It was suggested that the risk could be deescalated to a departmental risk.

ACTION: That

[2] the Planning and Performance team review the risk scoring for risk 889.

995 – Fire Pension – Increase in employers' contributions to firefighter pensions

The Treasurer advised that despite the Chancellor announcing that there would be no autumn budget, there was likely to be a Spending Review for one year. An announcement by the Government about the grant was awaited.

The Chair also advised that once the backdated payment from the McCloud case had been paid, all grey book employees would move onto the new pension scheme to mitigate further risk.

1004 – ESCMP/ESN – Ongoing Maintenance

It was noted that the risk had been reduced following the confirmation of an extended Airwave contract. The Group Manager for Operational Policy and Projects advised that more SANJ radios were being purchased for the mobilisation of Rapid Response Rescue Units that would be introduced on to on-call fire stations. It was agreed that the risk could be deescalated to a departmental risk.

ACTION: That

[3] the Planning and Performance update the Risk Register by removing risk 1004.

1008 – McCloud/Sergeant Judgement – Pension Case

The Treasurer advised that updated guidance was published in August.

2035 – Blue Light Collaboration

The Director for Governance and Commissioning informed the group that the Joint Corporate Services Business Plans were to undergo scrutiny before approval. He advised that the risk would be continue to be relevant. He confirmed that he would provide updates as appropriate.

2029 – COVID-19

The Planning, Performance and Risk Officer advised that the risk had recently been updated to take into consideration the potential of a second wave of infections impacting upon staff absence.

A Member queried whether the recent Government tier system had impacted the Service. The Chair advised that the tier system had not significantly impacted operations. However, he requested that the Group Manger for Organisational Performance send an update about Covid-19 to all Members.

Another Member queried whether a degradation plan had been formalised. The Chair confirmed that an escalation process was in place to mitigate the risk of higher absenteeism, particularly over the winter months.

ACTION: That

[4] an update prepared by the Group Manager for Organisational Performance on the impact of Covid-19 be submitted to all Members.

4 OPERATIONAL AND CORPORATE SERVICES RISK MAP

The Planning, Performance and Risk Officer introduced a report which presented a high level overview of the Service's organisational risk profile mapped by each department.

The Chair gave the opportunity for the Board to request a Deep Dive report for the next meeting. Members requested a deep dive report on the impact of Covid-19 upon funding for the Prince's Trust Programme.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Operational and Corporate Services Risk Map be noted.

ACTION: That

[1] a Deep Dive report on the impact of Covid-19 upon funding for the Prince's Trust Programme be submitted to the next Risk Management Board meeting.

5 REFRESH OF RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Planning, Performance and Risk Officer introduced the refreshed Risk Management Policy which required approval from the Board. The policy had been updated to reflect current practises. It was reviewed every three years.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the refreshed of Risk Management Policy be approved.

6 UPDATE ON BENCHMARKING OPTIONS

The Planning, Performance and Risk Officer introduced a report which noted progress in respect of the benchmarking options which were agreed at the last Risk Management Board meeting.

It was noted that options 3, 4 and 5 were complete. Options 1 and 2 were postponed due to the impact of Covid-19 and social distancing requirements which made organising meetings indoors difficult.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the update on Benchmarking Options be noted.

7 COVID-19 INTERIM DEBRIEF REPORT

The Group Manager for Operational Policy and Projects introduced the report which provided an update on the response and feedback from staff and partner agencies since the implementation of Covid-19 restrictions. He also presented the latest version of the Pandemic Business Continuity Plan to the Board.

The Board noted that the documents helped to identify lessons learnt and mitigate future risks. Most feedback received was positive. However, some minor actions were necessary.

A Member queried whether other impacts of the Covid-19 restrictions, such as local authority restrictions, working within the community and the procurement of IT and personal protective equipment for staff had also been taken into consideration within the plan. The Group Manager confirmed that these issues had been considered and procurement routes had been adapted to access personal protective equipment for staff.

It was queried whether contingencies were in place to cover operational roles. The Chair reassured the Board that it was unlikely that the Service would be unable to respond to incidents. Thus far since the Pandemic started there had been few

significant incidents. North West fire and rescues services also had an agreement to support one another during such incidents.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the Covid-19 Interim Debrief report be noted.

8 ON CALL AVAILABILITY UPDATE

The Head of Service Delivery delivered a presentation to the group which provided an update on progress to improve the Service's on call availability. He explained the variety of ways that the Service's recruitment campaign programmes had targeted the public and how availability for on call stations had increased since the Covid-19 restrictions were put in place.

Members commented on the encouraging increase in availability and queried what actions were being taken to maintain these levels. The Head of Service Delivery assured Members that work was underway to explore how staff can continue to work from home, or on station to increase responsiveness.

Members also queried whether attendance based rewards were given to on call staff to help maintain availability. It was confirmed that rewards were given once staff had gained competence, qualifications, or increased their availability.

The Chair announced that the Head of Service Delivery had been appointed as the Chair of the National Fire Chief Council National On-call Working Group.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the On Call Availability be noted.