

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

ITEM: 3

MEETING OF DATE : GOVERNANCE & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
: 2ND APRIL 2014
REPORT OF AUTHOR : HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT : SCHEME OF DELEGATION UPDATE AND UNITARY PERFORMANCE GROUPS

Purpose of Report

1. This report has been prepared to update Members about progress in redrafting the Scheme of Delegation and the terms of reference and arrangements for the operation of the Unitary Performance Groups.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members consider the latest version of the interim Scheme of Delegation and provide such further comment/guidance as they see fit; and
- [2] Members authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to make further drafting amendments and improvements to the interim Scheme of Delegation prior to submitting it to the Fire Authority for approval; and
- [3] Members approve the updated wording relating to Unitary Performance Groups.

Background

2. At the last meeting of this Committee Members:
 - Accepted the suggested approach to the preparation of a revised Scheme of Delegation; namely that an interim version be produced for approval in the near future with a better more-developed version being submitted for consideration at a later date; and
 - Made a number of suggestions about the future governance of the Unitary Performance Groups.

Information

Scheme of Delegation

3. The latest version of the interim Scheme of Delegation is attached to this report as Appendix 1. This still has some anomalous elements and inconsistencies of approach, which will be worked on in the next few weeks. To allow Members to make a comparison the current scheme is attached as Appendix 2.
4. Members are asked to approve the interim Scheme noting that work will continue on the document. Currently, it is hoped that there will be time to carry out a final cross-reference of statutory responsibilities and job responsibilities. However, even if this is not possible the current draft is a considerable improvement over the current scheme.

Unitary Performance Groups

5. Following the last meeting, with the benefit of the guidance provided by the Committee, the Chair, Deputy Chair, Group Spokesperson for the Democratic Group and the other Lead Members were consulted about the proposed changes to the terms of reference for and operation of the Unitary Performance Groups (UPGs).
6. A range of comments were received and it is fair to say that Members are keen to see a full debate about this issue (at the UPGs themselves and possibly at a Planning Day) before changes are reported to the Fire Authority. Accordingly, it is proposed to make a change to the existing wording (to reflect the reality of the current situation) until that debate has progressed to a satisfactory conclusion.
7. The following wording should be removed:

At two of the meetings per year each of the Unitary Performance areas have a public consultation meeting which provide opportunities for the public to attend and raise issues directly. These meetings take place in November at the beginning of the IRMP process and in April/May to report back on past performance. These two meetings are usually chaired by a Lead Member for each area.

and replaced with:

The Unitary Performance Groups are able to engage with constituents about key issues affecting their area in circumstances where normal consultation processes and performance reporting are deemed to be insufficient.

Legal and Financial Implications

8. A robust Scheme of Delegation supports the good governance of the organisation and helps officer and Members understand their respective roles and responsibilities.

Equality and Diversity and Environmental Implications

9. There are no specific implications anticipated as a result of decisions in relation to the issues raised in this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE