



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 26 July 2023.

PRESENT

Ms. Betty Newton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. G. Allen CC	Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Cllr. S. Barton	Mr. B. Harrison-Rushton CC
Mr. S. L. Bray CC	Cllr. S. Harvey
Mr. B. Champion CC	Mrs. H. Fryer CC
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC	Cllr. Abdul Osman
Mr. D. A. Gamble CC	Mr. C. Smith CC
Cllr. M. Sood	Cllr. H. Orton

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Judi Beresford, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
 Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer
 Amy Oliver, Treasurer

27. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. N. Bannister CC, Councillor A Byrne, Mr. D. Grimley CC, Councillor H Rae Bhatia, and Mr. N. Rushton CC.

28. Declarations of Interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare an interest in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

29. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

30. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman's announcements were circulated in advance of the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes. The announcements covered the following matters:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Mobilising System.

31. Public Participation/ CFA Rules of Procedure Rule 9 - Member Questions.

It was reported that no questions had been received.

32. Minutes.

The minutes of the CFA meeting held on 21 June 2023 were considered.

It was moved by Mrs. M. E. Newton CC and seconded by Mr. B. Champion CC that the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 21 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the CFA meeting held on 21 June 2023 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

33. Community Risk Management Plan 2024-28.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the approach for the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-28. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

The Fire Standards Board Fire Standard for Community Risk Management Planning stated that a fire and rescue service must assess foreseeable community related risks and use the knowledge to decide how the risks would be mitigated. The planning needed to consider the use of data and business intelligence, ensure that all activities had the appropriate equality impact assessments in place and that there was suitable stakeholder and public engagement on the Plan.

The approach was to consult on the complete 'Our Plan' document, which included the hazards to communities and the main activities being undertaken to mitigate these. One particular element for public consultation related to Day Crewing Plus, particularly at Castle Donnington fire station, where the proposal was to make this day time crew only with staff and equipment from other stations being used in the evenings. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that this was the most suitable option as it was not possible to maintain the current position. However, assurance was given that this would not result in a reduction in service delivery.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

- i) The current attendance time target of 10 minutes was becoming more challenging and it was likely that this would need to be reviewed. It was stated that this was largely due to a greater number of road traffic collisions in more rural locations, which took longer for crews to reach. Roadworks and increased traffic, particularly in more urban areas, were also an issue. It was reported that the new Variable Response Vehicles were due to arrive in the coming weeks; these would have a positive impact on the CFA's commitment to climate change and this would be publicised.
- ii) A member raised a comment that fire engines often struggled to get to incidents through town centres due to vehicles being parked on the roads. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that officers had leaflets which looked like

fixed penalty notices, and these would be placed on vehicles where there had been an issue. Assurance was given that the Service was very proactive in raising awareness in local communities and on social media of the importance in keeping areas clear. Where there was a particular issue, the Service would work with the Police to improve the situation.

- iii) The potential fire safety risks arising from festivals and the importance of raising awareness of these was highlighted. There had previously been opportunities to engage with communities but this would be reconsidered.
- iv) In relation to public consultation on the CRMP, it was agreed that there should be hard copies available in certain locations as not everyone had access to respond online. Public consultation would commence in September and the final CRMP would be presented to the CFA at its meeting in February 2024.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Bray CC and seconded by Mr Champion CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the following approach for public consultation be approved, which concentrates on delivering the 'Aims' of the Service which support the five Service Strategies:

- Safer Communities Strategy Aim – fewer incidents with reduced consequences
- Response Strategy Aim – respond effectively to incidents
- Finance and Resources Strategy Aim – deliver value for money quality services
- People Strategy Aim – an engaged and productive workforce
- Governance Strategy Aim – provide assurance.

34. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Update.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-2027 and presented the Annual Equalities Report 2022-2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

- i) The appointment of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager would provide an opportunity to review the current Equalities Scheme and how reporting could be improved. The recommendations from the HMICFRS report and independent cultural review would be reviewed and consolidated into one action plan. The Corporate Governance Committee would have oversight of this plan.
- ii) A breakdown of the current LFRS workforce showed that the number of female staff in the Service had increased. Lots of recruitment activity had taken place over recent months and it was encouraging to note that applicants were now more willing to disclose their characteristics. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer commented that the cultural report had not highlighted any significant issues within LFRS, but nevertheless the Service continued to be proactive in its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- iii) In response to a query around whether disability data included hidden disabilities, it was stated that this only included the information which staff chose to disclose. However, there appeared to be a greater disclosure around neurodiversity. The introduction of a health passport would assist in ensuring that people did not have to disclose their disabilities each time they applied for a different job.
- iv) The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer commented that it was necessary to have a balance between meeting the requirements of equality, diversity and inclusion against the operational needs of the Service. It would not be possible to accommodate some people with certain disabilities due to the nature of the role. As a result, people would recruited who could meet the statutory needs of the Service, even if this meant that the diversity of the workforce did not increase. Assurance was given that the entry criteria to be a Firefighter had been made as diverse as possible without compromising the necessary skills required.
- v) Work was taking place around what the Service could do as a whole to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion. A new recruitment campaign was due to commence shortly and it was hoped that the learning from reports would help with this. It was, however, acknowledged that some communities would not see being a Firefighter as a career. It was the intention to work with schools to ensure that young people had a greater understanding of the Service. Elected members also had an important role to play in promoting the Service in their local communities as a good career. Lots of work still needed to be undertaken, but it was hoped that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager would put the ambitions of the Service into practice.

The recommendations contained within the report were moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mr Champion CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) The progress made against the EDI Action Plan over the reporting period be noted;
- b) The consolidation of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion related actions detailed in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme 2022-2027, HMICFRS Spotlight Report, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS Inspection Report and the Internal Cultural Survey Findings report be approved; and
- c) The content of the Annual Equalities Report 2022-2023 be noted.

35. Variable Response Vehicles.

The CFA considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the introduction of Variable Response Vehicles (VRVs). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

The introduction of VRVs aimed to enhance operational efficiency, resource allocation, and overall service delivery. A twelve month trial period was due to take place across four stations, following which feedback would be sought from officers using the VRVs. It was hoped that the introduction of VRVs would increase appliance availability and would also contribute positively to the FRS's commitment to climate change.

In response to a query, the VRVs would be utilised in as many operational scenarios as possible. However, trials would take place in certain instances, for example, flooding.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that there could be savings from VRVs; these would be included in the report following the trial.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mrs Fryer CC and seconded by Councillor Barton. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

36. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on 4 October 2023 at 10.00am at County Hall, Glenfield.

10.00 - 11.15 am
26 July 2023

CHAIRMAN

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