



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 13 March 2024.

PRESENT

Mr. R. G. Allen CC (in the Chair)

Mr. K. Ghattoraya CC
Mr. D. J. Grimley CC

Ms. Betty Newton CC
Cllr. H. Orton

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer
Colin Sharpe, on behalf of the Treasurer
Neil Jones, Head of Internal Audit Services, Leicestershire County Council
Matt Davis, Audit Manager, Leicestershire County Council
Karl Bowden, Head of People and Organisational Development
Isla Dixon, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Bipon Bhakri, Independent Member
Alec Maxfield, Independent Member

71. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. N. Bannister CC, Councillor H Rae Bhatia, Councillor S Barton and Councillor S Harvey.

72. 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.

73. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

74. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman made his announcements which covered the following matters:

- Direct Entry Station Managers
- Recent Actions of a Firefighter.

75. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

76. Progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which provided an update of progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Three partial assurance reports and associated high importance recommendations required progress updates to be reported back to the Committee in order to provide assurance that they had been adequately addressed. One audit, relating to ICT Controls, included two high importance recommendations in respect of Disaster Recovery. Due to successful testing, it was recommended that these two high importance recommendations could now be closed down.

In response to a query around Disaster Recovery, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer commented that the length of time taken to get systems working would largely depend on the type of attack. Work had been undertaken with the Home Office National Cyber Security Centre, with FRS's completing a survey to establish the base level.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, and in particular that:

- a) one legacy partial assurance report relating to a disaster recovery strategy and associated testing has now been addressed;
- b) two legacy partial assurance reports (relating to Contract Procedure Rules and BACS respectively) containing high importance recommendations remain outstanding. These will be retested as part of the 2024/25 coverage; and
- c) work is progressing well with the 2023/24 audit plan and is at the stage anticipated for this time of year.

77. Internal Audit Plan 2024/25, External Quality Review of Leicestershire County Council's Internal Audit Service and the Internal Audit Charter for the CFA (February 2024).

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which provided the opportunity to review the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25, gave details on the plans for an External Quality Assessment of Leicestershire County Council's Internal Audit Service and presented the revised Internal Audit Charter, which was a key governance document. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 be noted, including that the detail of the Plan may change during the year in response to emerging issues and risks; and
- b) as part of its function to monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the Internal Audit Service:
 - i) the plans for an External Quality Assessment of Leicestershire County Council's Internal Audit Service be noted; and
 - ii) the revised Internal Audit Charter for the CFA be approved.

78. Organisational Risk Register.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the progress made in the identification, documentation and management of organisational risk through the Organisational Risk Register. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the Organisational Risk Register (ORR) had been updated to include five new strategy risks. These provided an element of risk assessment to the creation of the five strategies contained within the Community Risk Management Plan and gave assurance that effort and resource was allocated to strategies based on risk.

The overall level of assessed risk had remained slightly reduced due to the implementation of planned control measures. However, two risks remained in the corporate level for management oversight and one new risk (Workforce Planning) had been added to Chapter 1 of the ORR.

In response to a query, it was stated that the risk of Industrial Action was low but had been reviewed following the introduction of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023. Since the review had been carried out, details of the likely level of service required from Trades Unions had been published. Internal planning arrangements were under review to reflect the changes and once complete, it was likely that the risk assessment would change.

In relation to Chapter 3, Health and Safety Risks, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that the risks remained as previously assessed. It was acknowledged that the environments firefighters worked in were dangerous and they had to face a number of risks. However, it was felt that the work being undertaken to reduce these risks was appropriate. There appeared to be an increasing risk around contaminants and a report was due to be presented to a future meeting of the CFA on the development of the Learning and Development facility to improve training.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the Organisational Risk Register, attached as an Appendix to the report) be noted.

79. Gender Pay Gap Report 2023/24.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item' 9 is filed with these minutes.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that the figures included in the report appeared to be inaccurate; there had been an improvement in diversity of employees at LFRS so it was unclear why there appeared to be such an increase in the gender pay gap (even allowing for known factors such as the firefighter pay award). Assurance was given that the figures would be revisited to ensure that they were correct for the forthcoming Government submission and a further update would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mr Allen CC and seconded by Mrs Newton CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

80. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the CFA Corporate Governance Committee will be held on 10 July 2024 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 2.40 pm
13 March 2024

CHAIRMAN