

Minutes of a meeting of the CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 20 November 2019.

PRESENT

Mrs. B. Newton CC (in the Chair)

Cllr. S. Barton

Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC

Mr. D. Harrison CC

Ms. Betty Newton CC

Mr J. Poland CC

Cllr. A. Thalukdar

30. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor K. Bool, Councillor Fonseca, Mr. J. Kaufman CC and Rick Taylor.

31. To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this agenda.

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

No declarations were made.

32. To advise of any other items which the Chair has decided to take as urgent.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

33. Chair's Announcements.

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

Castle Donington Memorial Garden
VIP engagement day
Justice Service
Combined Fire Authorities Conference on 9 – 10 October
Hope and Remembrance Cathedral Service
Remembrance Service

The Chairman highlighted the Castle Donington Memorial Garden, created to mark the death of Crew Manager Paul Wilkins, and the Justice Service held at Oakham Castle on 2 October 2019.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed Members that corporate workwear and service identity had been highlighted as an important aspect of the perception that staff felt valued; the Chairman had given his support to the creation of corporate branding. Officers would engage with staff and members on the design and ensure that it reflected each of the three counties.

Members commended the Equalities Officer for being nominated for an Excellence in Fire and Emergency Services Award 2019 and the Asian Fire Service Association for positive action.

Members were informed that the Bolton student accommodation fire on 16 November 2019 involved different external 'cladding' material to that of Grenfell. The National Fire Chiefs Council had published a response which highlighted the need to change building regulations more quickly and to maintain fire safety measures to the required standard.

Officers thanked the four members that had attended the performance workshop prior to the Committee meeting.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

The Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave the following update regarding item 12 - Fire Fighter Recruitment:

373 qualifying applications had been received and this had been reduced to 29 that were invited to interview;
Interviews had resulted in 14 new recruits and 8 migrations/transfers in from other Services;
Out of 14 new recruits: 11 male (79%), 3 female (21%), 4 BAME (29%) (All had GCSE Maths/English and so did not require fire service exam; only 1 did not have a driving license);
Out of the 8 who transferred in - 6 were male (75%) and 2 were female (25%).

Members were informed that the significant tangible success on diversity in recruitment in comparison to other Services was believed to have been positively influenced by the targeted "have a go" days. This initiative had been recognised by the Asian Fire Service Association which had nominated the Service for an award. Members welcomed the improved diversity of the recent recruitment exercise.

35. Financial Monitoring to the end of September 2019.

The committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the key issues arising from the revenue budget and capital programme as at the end of September 2019. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the funding received for the New Dimensions Grant, was higher than that budgeted as the actual figure had been confirmed after the budget had been set; a lower figure had been included in the budget so as to prevent a deficit situation.

RESOLVED:

That the revenue budget and capital programme position as at the end of September 2019 be noted.

36. Performance Monitoring April - September 2019.

The committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented an update on the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2019 – September 2019. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

Following discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. Regarding KCI 2.1 - the number of deaths from primary fire, an eighth death had been recorded during November;
- ii. The number of medical incident/co-responder incidents attended (KCI 1.9) had reduced in September/October; East Midlands Ambulance Service had been approached and an explanation was awaited;
- iii. 'After the Incident' surveys were distributed to people at incidents where it was appropriate. Officers were considering alternative ways to increase engagement with people in order to increase completion of the survey.

Members commended the Service for achieving 100% satisfaction from customers who had completed the Survey.

RESOLVED:

That the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April – September 2019 be noted.

37. Service Development Programme and 'Our Plan' Update.

The committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning progress made since September 2019 in delivering projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks included in Appendix A of Our Plan 2019-22. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Members endorsed the introduction of the Tactical Response Vehicle and were informed that the TRV was used for a variety of calls received. Should an incident require additional support, further back-up was called.

Members commended the introduction of the variety of wellbeing support that was in place for staff following incidents, including Trauma Risk Management (TRIM). Different levels of response were available; for larger incidents the Service had a contract with specialist provider AMICA, to ensure that staff were fully supported.

The Committee recognised the work of the back-office staff within the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service who enabled projects and initiatives to be delivered.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made since September 2019 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks that are included in Our Plan 2019-22 be noted.

38. Progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2019/20.

The committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the progress made against the Internal Audit Plan 2019-20. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the audit of General Data Protection Regulation/ Data Protection Act Compliance (20/1) had been completed.

Regarding the High Importance recommendations, additional follow-up work would be needed for the Payroll System and this work had commenced early. Work for the other High Importance recommendations, concerning ICT Controls and Contract Procedure Rules would be addressed in quarter 4.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the progress made with the Internal Audit Plan 2019-20 be noted.

39. Developments in Audit and Governance.

The committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the current and planned developments in audit and governance, that were associated with the Committee's responsibilities. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The Treasurer tabled additional documents to support the report:

- Questions asked as part of the Redmond Review;
- The response to these questions from CIPFA.

A copy of which is filed with these minutes.

The Treasurer informed members that the Redmond Review followed a number of high-profile poor performing companies and local authorities. She expressed concern about the outcome of the Review which compared the Fire and Rescue Service to a business when the operating conditions were very different; for FRS pay, terms and conditions and pensions were all determined nationally. She highlighted that the CFA needed to remain sighted on the outcome of the Redmond Review and agreed to present a report to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a. That the information provided on the current and planned developments in audit and governance be noted;
- b. A further report be presented to the Committee at a future meeting concerning the outcome of the Redmond Review.

40. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Improvement Plan.

The committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the actions taken to develop an Improvement Plan to respond to the HMICFRS Inspection report. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Improvement Plan was tabled at the meeting, a copy of which is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that officers were currently considering how working practices and software could be developed in order to make the next inspection run more smoothly, both for Service staff and HMI Inspectors, by having evidence available ahead of the inspection.

Members expressed concern that 43 inaccuracies had been identified in the report from HMICFRS and had been fed back to inspectors.

Members were informed that staff in the Service had, as advocates, led the development of a new set of values and behaviours and would be leading the promotion of these, as identified in P1 of the Improvement Plan, as Staff Champions. This approach had led to a high involvement of staff in this project.

Members offered their support to the work as required.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a. The Improvement Plan and monitoring arrangements in place to address the HMICFRS findings of the HMICFRS inspection report be noted; and
- b. A report to be presented to the Committee in July 2020 giving an update on the progress made with the HMICFRS Improvement Plan.

41. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee will be held on Wednesday 22 January 2020 at Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield.

2.00 - 3.10 pm
20 November 2019

CHAIRMAN