



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 20 September 2023.

PRESENT

Ms. Betty Newton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. N. D. Bannister CC
Cllr. S. Barton

Mr. D. J. Grimley CC
Cllr. Hemant Rae Bhatia

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Stuart McAvoy, Head of Finance, Leicester City Council
Matt Davis, Audit Manager, Leicestershire County Council
Gemma Duckworth, Senior Democratic Services Officer

46. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. R. Allen CC, Mr. D. Gamble CC, Mr. K. Ghattoraya and Councillor S Harvey.

47. 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.

48. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items.

49. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman made her announcements which covered the following matters:

- Variable Response Vehicles
- Performance
- CRMP

50. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

51. Financial Monitoring to the end of July 2023.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the financial monitoring to the end of July 2023, including the key issues arising from the revenue budget and capital programme. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the revenue position currently showed an overall forecast overspend of £341,000; this was planned to be funded from the budget strategy reserve. The capital programme was reporting spend of £506,000 to date. Slippage of £3,626,000 had been identified and was being kept under review. Due to favourable interest rates compared to budget interest receivable, this was forecast to be £340,000 more than budget.

Shortages in staffing levels had led to some delays in progressing the estates capital programme, with the majority of the slippage relating to the procurement exercise for the Eastern and Southern Fire station refurbishment projects. It was reported that slippage of £244,000 was also forecast for the Fire Control Project.

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

RESOLVED:

That the revenue budget and capital programme position at the end of July 2023 be noted.

52. Performance Monitoring April - August 2023.

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 2023 to August 2023. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The total number of incidents attended in the period was higher than anticipated. However, there had been a decrease in the number of secondary fire incidents attended. There had been a significant increase in the number of special service incidents attended; this continued to be a challenging area of work due to the type of incidents and the locations in which they occurred. For example, road traffic collisions and support for the Police and Ambulance Service tended to be required in more rural locations. There had also been an increase in the number of responses to flooding incidents, but this was largely out of the control of the Service.
- ii) The current average response time for life threatening incidents was 11 minutes 15 seconds, which was significantly outside the target of 10 minutes. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer recognised that this target was currently unattainable and a number of initiatives were being considered to address the issue. As part of the CRMP, there was a proposal to increase the target response time for life threatening incidents to 12 minutes (including the call handline time), except for primary domestic dwelling fires.
- iii) A contributing factor to the increased response time was the fact that many incidents were in more rural locations. Consideration had previously been given to relocating some fire stations, but this would not improve the situation. It was also not possible to

increase resources to such an extent that it would have a long lasting impact. It was the intention to focus community prevention work in more rural areas.

iv) In relation to Home Fire Safety Checks (KCI4) and Fire Protection and Enforcement (KCI5), the Service continued to improve its performance and was now in the top five best performing FRS in the country. A more detailed report around this performance was being presented to the CFA at its meeting on 4 October.

v) In response to a query around support for officers attending suicides, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that crews were very supportive of one another after incidents, and a number of staff had undertaken mental health fire aid training. The service also used the TRIM system whereby officers who had attended or dealt with a fatal incident were referred to see a TRIM practitioner. Where required, external practitioners were utilised and staff had access to external counselling.

vi) It was noted that the new mobilising system was very sophisticated and data was based on real time information which could identify the location of an incident very quickly. The new vehicles had live tracking equipment, and it was hoped that this would reduce the current response time.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Mrs Newton CC and seconded by Councillor Rae Bhatia. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2023 to August 2023 be noted.

53. Service Development Programme and 'Our Plan 2020-24' Appendix A Tasks.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented the progress made since July 2023 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks included in Appendix A of Our Plan 2020-24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

i) It was pleasing to note that the replacement mobilising system project was ahead of schedule, and the first stage of the project was due to be implemented by December 2023. Training for staff was beginning to take place and discussions were being undertaken with partners to ensure that there was an appropriate back up if there was an issue with the system.

ii) In relation to attendance at life threatening incidents, it was stated that District Managers were engaging with Community Safety Partnerships around rural road traffic collisions. Work was also taking place with Leicestershire Police to undertake co-enforcement and education events.

iii) Lots of positive work was taking place around equality and inclusion. A query was raised around whether LFRS was better at capturing complaints and being aware of what was happening across the Service. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that lots had been undertaken to create an environment where staff felt comfortable to report any issues. The Service had subscribed to the 'Say So' phone service and had promoted its

whistleblowing policy to staff. Where required, it was felt that staff were dealt with effectively and a number of networks were in place to cover protected characteristics. The recommendations from the Spotlight report continued to be worked through to ensure further improvements were being made. A more detailed report would be provided to the exempt part of the next meeting.

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

RESOLVED

That the progress made since July 2023 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks that are included in Our Plan 2020-24 be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which gave an update of progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

i) Work was progressing well with the 2023/24 audit plan and was at the stage anticipated for this time of year. Of the ten pieces of work for the 2023/24 internal audit plan, all prior year audits had been completed, two current year audits had been finalised and reported, one current year audit was at draft report stage, six current year audits were at various stages of work in progress, and one current year audit had not yet stated. It was the intention that this would be undertaken in parallel with another piece of work.

ii) It had been agreed that one audit, relating to Learning and Development, would be replaced by an audit of the Risk Based Inspection Programme.

iii) There were three partial assurance reports and associated high importance recommendations and progress against these was reported.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, in particular that:

a) three legacy partial assurance report ratings containing high importance recommendations remain outstanding and the ACFO (Service Support) continues to work to bring timely resolutions to these outstanding actions; and

b) work is progressing well with the 2023/24 audit plan and is at the stage anticipated for this time of year.

55. 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 10' is filed with these minutes.

The overall level of assessed risk had remained steady due to the implementation of planned control measures. Failure of the mobilising system and inability to receive 999 calls remained the two most significant risks on the Register. The global pandemic continued to be a risk, along with cyber security. However, lots of work had been undertaken to ensure control measures were in place.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report and the Organisational Risk Register be noted.

56. People Programme of Work.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which provided an update on the actions arising from the Cultural Survey and other people related plans, including the HMICFRS 'Spotlight' report and the Service's external cultural review. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that work was in hand across the Service to ensure relevant recommendations from the Spotlight report were acted on and to move forward positively as an organisation. It was acknowledged that there was more work to do to develop the Service, but there was an absolute commitment to ensure improvement and ultimately, it would be the responsibility of everyone. Further detail would be included in the exempt report around the level of comfort in reporting issues.

It was noted that the People Plan would be signposted in the CRMP.

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

RESOLVED:

That the People Plan and programme of work being implemented across the Service be noted.

57. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the CFA Corporate Governance Committee will be held on 22 November 2023 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 2.56 pm
20 September 2023

CHAIRMAN