

Minutes of a meeting of the CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 25 July 2018.

PRESENT

Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC
Cllr. K. Bool
Mr. D. Harrison CC
Cllr. K. Singh Johal

Mr. J. Kaufman CC
Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr J. Poland CC
Cllr. A. Thalukdar

Apologies

Cllr. K. Master
Rick Taylor the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

In attendance

Andrew Brodie, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Alison Greenhill, Treasurer
Richard Hall, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer
Umar Jillani, KPMG
Neil Jones, Internal Audit Leicestershire County Council
Anna Poole, Democratic Services Leicestershire County Council

1. Election of Chairman.

The Monitoring Officer invited nominations for the position of Chairman.

It was moved by Mr. D Harrison CC and seconded by Mr. J. Poland CC that Councillor Ken Bool be elected Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC).

There being no other nominations, the Monitoring Officer declared Councillor Ken Bool elected as Chairman of the CGC.

Councillor Ken Bool – in the Chair

2. Election of Vice Chairman.

It was moved by Councillor A. Thalukdar and seconded by Councillor. K. Singh Johal that Mrs. Betty Newton CC be elected Vice Chairman of the CFA.

There being no other nominations, the Chairman declared Mrs. Betty Newton CC elected as Vice Chairman of the CFA.

3. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor K. Master, who was attending a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, and Rick Taylor the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

4. 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 any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

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

There were no urgent items for consideration.

6. Chair's Announcements.

The Chairman informed the Corporate Governance Committee of the following:

- i) Regarding the Hinckley Road explosion, a structured internal debrief had taken place to ensure that any learning was captured for Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. This was followed by multi-agency debriefs, facilitated independently by the College of Policing, into the work of the Tactical and Strategic Coordinating Groups. This learning would be shared within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and nationally.
- ii) The recent spell of hot and dry weather had created conditions for significant wild fires in some parts of the country. Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland had not been badly affected although had sent resources to Lancashire and Derbyshire to support their efforts in tackling such incidents.
- iii) On the afternoon of Thursday 19th July, there was a fire death in Oakham of an 80 year old woman, which had been caused accidentally. Work had been carried out in the local area since the event to reinforce fire safety messages, to install smoke detection devices where necessary and to refer any concerns regarding vulnerable people to relevant agencies.

7. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 14 March 2018.

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

8. Head of Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2017-18.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the Head of Internal Audit Service (HoIAS) Annual Report 2017-18. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 8", is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was informed that, whilst there were some partial assurance ratings, the HoIAS was sufficiently satisfied with the attention paid to, and progress against audits to report that the CFA's control environment was overall adequate and effective.

RESOLVED:

That the Head of Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2017-18 be approved.

9. Progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2018 - 19.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the progress made against the Internal Audit Plan 2018-19. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 9", is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was informed that progress had been made on implementing the high importance recommendations identified in the previous year.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made against the Internal Audit Plan 2018-19 be noted.

10. Internal Audit Service - Outcome of Peer Review.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the outcome of the peer review on the Internal Audit Service. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 10", is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was informed that the overall rating 'generally conforms' was the top rating which was encouraging, as a great deal of work had been completed in readiness for the peer review.

Mrs. Betty Newton CC commended officers for their work in preparing for the peer review.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Internal Audit Service – Outcome of Peer Review be noted.

11. Performance Monitoring April 2017 - March 2018.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2017 – March 2018. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 11", is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that, overall, performance was on target or had improved beyond target since the previous report to the Committee.

Of concern, was the number of deaths from primary fires, which was above target. It was recognised that numbers were high last year, contributed to by the Hinckley Road explosion.

The Committee was informed that the performance data showed that the availability of fire engines crewed by on-call firefighters averaged only 58%. This was a pattern evident across the Country as the recruitment of on-call fire fighters was a challenge due to a variety of complex issues. At least four people were needed to operate each fire engine effectively. A recruitment exercise for on-call fire fighters was in place and officers would

conduct a full review of the systems used to recruit, employ, contract and pay on-call fire fighters. It was recognised that there was a need to adopt a different approach in order to meet the expectations of potential new recruits. The main issue related to the requirement for on-call fire fighters to be available during the working day; something that would be a challenge for many employed people. Station Managers would establish and maintain relationships with local employers to encourage the release of staff during working hours. The use of Tactical Response Vehicles would improve availability of the service as only a crew of two staff were required to operate the engine. It was expected that the investment in these vehicles would improve performance in the future.

Performance was above target for indicators related to the sickness of operational and support staff, and the level of sickness was increasing. Officers had completed a review of the systems in place to address sickness absence, in conjunction with Human Resources, who were engaging with managers. The occupational health service would also be reviewed. It was recognised that the sickness level was higher for support staff, compared to operational staff and that the highest cause was mental health issues. However, Members were informed that support staff worked 5 days per week and, therefore, lost more days due to sickness than operational staff who worked fewer shifts of longer hours.

A Strategy was in place to address the levels of sickness in the Service; mental health was a priority in the new People Strategy. There was also a requirement for all line managers to complete a Mental Health First Aid Course so that staff could be properly supported.

RESOLVED:

That the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2017 – March 2018 be noted.

12. After the Incident Survey 2017 - 18.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the outcome of the 'After the Incident' Survey 2017-18. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 12", is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was informed that each survey was carried out by Opinion Research, and the resulting data was compared with 8 other Fire and Rescue Services. LFRS had a high level of public satisfaction.

Service users who had experienced an emergency incident that had been attended by LFRS were contacted for feedback. However, incidents involving a serious injury or fatality were excluded, as were first responder incidents.

Members were informed that officers were exploring options for obtaining better quality and better value data.

RESOLVED:

That the outcome of the 'After the Incident' Survey 2017-18 be noted and the evaluation of alternative methods for capturing service user feedback and satisfaction levels in the future be supported.

13. Service Development Programme Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer regarding the progress made in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 13", is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) Progress against the Service Development Programme was on track;
- ii) Although funding would cease in September 2018 for the Braunstone Blues project, the project had shown successful results. Lessons learned from the project would be mirrored elsewhere in the County, especially in relation to public sector workers working collaboratively to provide a more comprehensive service to the community;
- iii) LFRS was working collaboratively with Leicestershire Police, so that in future the use of drones may be available to search for vulnerable people and to assist at complex fires.

RESOLVED:

That progress against the Service Development Programme be noted.

14. Combined Fire Authority Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2017 - 18.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2017-18. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 14", is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the Accounts and Audit Regulations had changed; the requirement was for the Audited Accounts to be signed off by the 31 July 2018. At its meeting on 20 June, the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) agreed to delegate authority to the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) to formally agree the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement for 2017-18. The Annual Governance Statement would be signed after the meeting by the Chairman of the CGC, the Treasurer and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer.

Umar Jillani, External Auditor, KPMG was welcomed to the meeting to offer his comments and opinion on the audit. The CFA's Financial Statements were fully supported and endorsed by KPMG.

RESOLVED:

That the

- a) ISA 260 report presented by KPMG be noted;

and

- b) the Letter of Representation, the Statement of Accounts 2017/18 and the Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 be approved.

15. Financial Monitoring to the end of June 2018.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the financial monitoring to the end of June 2018. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 15", is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the revenue and capital budget position at the end of June 2018 be noted.

16. Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which informed the Committee of the actions taken by LFRS to respond to the requirements in the revised Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 16", is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions, Members were informed that LFRS respond to incidents on behalf of the East Midlands Ambulance Service, although this was not supported by the Fire Brigade Union at a national level. Locally, this approach reflected the core duties of the LFRS and helped to meet its aims of improving community safety and identifying vulnerability; the mutual benefit to both organisations was highlighted.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England be noted.

17. Apprenticeships.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the Apprenticeship Strategy of LFRS. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 17", is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) As a vacancy arises in future, consideration would be given as to whether it could be filled with an apprentice;
- ii) The long term aspiration was for LFRS to become an Employer Provider of Apprenticeship training; a role which was currently delivered by a third party. This would enable LFRS to pay their Learning and Development department to provide the training; reinvesting the apprenticeship levy in-house and ensuring that the quality of training delivered meets the needs of LFRS;
- iii) The Apprenticeship Levy could be used for paying development costs only; salary costs were not included;
- iv) LFRS was working with Leicestershire Police to develop accredited training and development in leadership skills.

RESOLVED:

That the

- i) progress of LFRS in developing the Apprenticeship Strategy be noted; and
- ii) the plan and approach set out in the report be approved.

18. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee will be held on Wednesday 12 September 2018 at 2pm at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service HQ, Birstall.

2.00 - 3.34pm
25 July 2018

CHAIRMAN