

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held at the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Wednesday 3rd September 2014.

PRESENT

Mr S Bray CC (Chair)

Cllr S Barton

Cllr D Bajaj

Mr M Charlesworth CC

Mr J Coxon CC

Mrs J Fox CC

Mr P Lewis CC

Mr R Shepherd CC

OFFICERS

Mr D Webb Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Mr R Chandler Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

Mr S Lunn Director of Community Services

Mr T Peel Treasurer and Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Mr R Hall Area Manager – Organisational Change Project

Mr G Goodman Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Mrs J Green Member Services Coordinator

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N Jones Internal Audit, Leicestershire County Council (left 14:30 hrs)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Mr O O'Shea CC and Cllr A Byrne.

The Chair welcomed Mr Richard Shepherd CC to the meeting following his recent appointment to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA).

2. To receive declarations by members of interests in respect of items on this Agenda

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Chairman's Announcements

The Chair made reference to the training sessions being made available through

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and asked all interested parties to contact Guy Goodman or Jackie Green.

Members were also informed of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) announcement of a nationwide "Ring of Fire" tour of the UK to highlight their concerns about the impact of the Government's austerity measures on the fire and rescue service. The 'Tour' arrives in Leicester on Thursday, 18th September 2014 at The Clock Tower, Humberstone Gate and the event commences from midday.

4. Urgent Items

None.

5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28th May 2014 as a correct record.

RESOLVED

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 28th May 2014 as a correct record.

6. Appointment of External Auditor

The Treasurer presented this report to update the Committee on the procurement of audit services following a recent email from the Audit Commission to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO).

Members were informed that from 1st April 2015 KPMG will be the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) appointed external auditors. A report informing of the transition arrangements between KPMG and PwC will be presented at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

7. Internal Audit Reports 2013/14

The Treasurer and Mr Neil Jones, Internal Audit, Leicestershire County Council presented this report which provides detailed information on a number of Internal Audit reports based upon the 2013/14 Annual Internal Audit Plan.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Internal Audit Reports detailed in Section 3 and listed as Appendices 1 – 8.

8. Key Project Report

The Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (DCFO) presented the update report on all project development in the period since the last meeting of the Committee on 28th May 2014.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the report.

9. Performance Monitoring Report

The DCFO presented this report to update the Committee of performance against all secondary indicators for the financial year 2013/14, including further detail and analysis of selected relevant indicators.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the overall performance for 2013/14 and also the details analysis for the identified indicators.

10. Managing Unwanted Fire Signals

The Director of Community Services presented in this report the findings of the study into charging for repeated attendance at Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) together with the associated recommendation.

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed to recommend to the CFA that it adopts a policy, in principle, of recovering costs for UFS.

11. Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as 19th November 2014.

12. Resolved to exclude the public

The following item is exempt under Part 1, paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with Part 2, paragraph 10 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the public interest in the item remaining confidential outweighs the public interest in disclosure as the CFA is entitled to discuss these matters on a private basis before the outcomes are disseminated further for consultation.

13. Exempt Item – Organisational Change Project

The DCFO informed the Committee of the progress to date on the proposed process to be undertaken to ensure a balanced budget in future years. A wide ranging discussion took place including the following points:

- Without the onset of the reduced Government Grant, would you have engaged in this process anyway?
- Documents need to be totally accessible and easy to understand by the public.
- Communication of the consultation will be facilitated by the use of an external public survey organisation, Opinion Research Services (ORS).
- Keep a sound knowledge of where we are, where we want to be and how we aim to get there.
- Members confirmed where possible they would be happy to assist with handing out documents.
- Citizen Panels are still held at Wigston and Hinckley and Bosworth Councils.
- Take advantage of community meetings

- Would it be a good option to list questions separately as people mainly go to the areas they are personally interested in?
- Lobbying of MPs should take place – to be discussed at next CFA meeting
- Whether there should be a Council Tax Referendum would also be discussed at next CFA meeting
- ORS to run a presentation on 5th November at Policy Committee with all members to be invited.

RESOLVED:

The Committee discussed at length the contents of the report ahead of its submission to the CFA at its meeting in September 2014.

3rd September 2014
14:00 – 16:00

CHAIR