

Minutes of a meeting of the CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 21 November 2018.

PRESENT

Cllr. K. Bool (in the Chair)

Cllr. Sue Barton	Mr. D. Harrison CC
Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC	Mr. J. Kaufman CC
Cllr. K. Bool	Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mrs. H. J. Fryer CC	Cllr. A. Thalukdar
Mr. D. Harrison CC	

In attendance

Andrew Brodie, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
Matt Davis, Internal Audit Leicestershire County Council  
Alison Greenhill, Treasurer  
Richard Hall, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer  
Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer  
Anna Poole, Democratic Services Leicestershire County Council  
Rick Taylor, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

30. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Mr. Poland CC, Councillor K. Master and Councillor K. Singh Johal.

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

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 informed the Corporate Governance Committee that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) would be conducting an inspection of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) and invited Rick Taylor, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO) to give further information.

Members were informed that HMICFRS would be conducting the inspection during week commencing 3 December. Preparations were already underway; the inspectors had been in to the Service for a 'discovery week' between 15-19 October and would be delivering a strategic briefing on 22 November. This would be attended by the CFA Chairman and LFRS Senior Management Team.

For the full inspection in December, it was expected that up to 12 inspectors would attend, and that the inspection would include staff engagement, focus groups, and site visits to stations. Feedback on the high level findings would be received on 10 December, with the final report due in February 2019.

Members agreed to include an early update on the CGC agenda for the meeting on 23 January 2019.

**RESOLVED:**

That a report giving an early update on the HMICFRS Inspection findings would be presented at the Corporate Governance Committee meeting on 23 January 2019.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2018.

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12 September 2018 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

35. On-call Recruitment / Blood Donation Service.

The Committee received a presentation from Vince Howard, Watch Manager LFRS, concerning the action taken to recruit On-Call firefighters and details of collaboration work undertaken by LFRS with the NHS Blood Donation Service.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. Collaboratively working with the NHS Blood Donation Service had been borne out of a need to recruit On-call firefighters. Options to access and identify potential new recruits were being explored, and the Blood Donation Service gave access to large numbers of people. This also gave an opportunity to raise the profile of LFRS as an employer, the job roles available and presented the opportunity to promote other LFRS initiatives such as home safety and wellbeing;
- ii. The NHS uses 1,800 venues nationally each year; only 200 of which are free. The cost to the NHS in hiring venues to hold blood donation sessions amounted to £4million per year;
- iii. The initial trial undertaken at Market Harborough station saw 141 members of the public attending to donate blood. A further session has been held; both sessions saved the NHS £1,200;
- iv. Seven LFRS sites in Leicestershire have been surveyed, by LFRS and NHS staff, to assess suitability as a blood donation venue. Of the seven, six have been identified as suitable to progress – in Oakham, Wigston, Coalville, Loughborough, Castle Donington and Hinckley;
- v. In carrying out the surveys, videos have been produced which were available on the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) website; who had said that they were the most informative videos available and set a good standard nationally;
- vi. Officers were trying to improve the diversity of new recruits – especially females and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants – much of which was about dispelling myths about the role and what it entailed. Applicants who hadn't

met the standard initially were given advice on how to improve their strength and physical fitness and encouraged to re-apply;

Members commended LFRS officers for their collaboration work with the NHS and agreed to have a further update at a future CGC meeting.

*At 2.15pm, Councillor Sue Barton joined the meeting.*

**RESOLVED:**

That a report updating on progress made with the collaboration work with the NHS would be presented at the Corporate Governance Committee meeting in March 2019.

36. Firefighter Recruitment.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer regarding the action taken to recruit firefighters to meet the needs of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service up to 2020/21. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 7", is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. The LFRS Workforce Planning Group had predicted that there would be 34.5 vacancies for wholetime firefighters up to March 2021. Options to fill posts quickly were explored, and the consideration of 'transferees' from other fire services was agreed. 10 people had asked to transfer into LFRS;
- ii. The recruitment campaign for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland had concluded on 23 October 2018, and had resulted in 354 applicants with 346 being processed; 8 had been rejected as they lived outside of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The recruitment had resulted in 24 new recruits;
- iii. Of the 24 new recruits, 12 would be appointed this year; 12 would be placed on a 'holding list'. They would be recruited once the budget for 2019/20 was confirmed. This approach prevented the need for potential redundancies in the future, if the budget was less than expected. It was acknowledged that some applicants on the holding list may find alternative employment in the meantime;
- iv. Members expressed concern that 8 applicants had been rejected as they lived outside of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and felt that this could remove options for potential suitable new recruits. Members were informed that by recruiting locally, it was expected that the workforce would better reflect the diversity of the area that it served. This approach had been supported by the CFA some time ago, although this could be revisited if Members felt it necessary. Members agreed that if the current practice generated sufficient applicants, the recruitment processing of which was costly, then it need not be changed at this stage. A further update report to the CGC was welcomed;
- v. Regarding diversity, it was acknowledged that it was disappointing that only 16% of applicants were female; a variety of measures were undertaken to address this.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a. The report informing the Corporate Governance Committee of the action required to recruit firefighters to meet the needs of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service up to 2020/21 was noted;
- b. A report updating on progress made with firefighter recruitment would be presented at the Corporate Governance Committee meeting in March 2019.

37. Financial Monitoring to the end of October 2018.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the revenue and capital budget position as at the end of October 2018 (Financial Period 7). A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 8", is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the report presented a positive picture. Officers had been cautious in predicting future staffing levels; at this stage in the year this informed the budget setting in February 2019. In response to questions, Members were informed that "Earmarked" Reserves was one of the categories used to identify separate funding reserves; it did not mean that it was earmarked for anything specific at this stage.

Members expressed concern at the situation with East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) and asked that officers address with partners involved.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- a) the revenue and capital budget position as at the end of October 2018 be noted; and
- b) the transfer of £180,000 revenue and £325,000 capital saving to the capital fund earmarked reserve be approved.

38. Performance Monitoring April - October 2018.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer which presented an update on performance for the period April – October 2018. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 9", is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. All performance indicators were within the target range;
- ii. The % availability of on-call fire appliances (KCI 5.14) had dropped below 50%; this was an improvement compared to the previous report although it was recognised that there was more to be done;
- iii. The data for indicators 9.6 (average number of days/shifts lost to sickness by operational staff) and 9.7 (average number of days/shifts lost to sickness by support staff) had not been available at the time the performance report was written; this would be sent to Members separately;

**RESOLVED:**

That

- a. the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2018 – October 2018 be noted;
- b. the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer would send the performance data for the period April-October 2018 for the following indicators to members:
  - i. KCI 9.6 - average number of days/shifts lost to sickness by operational staff;
  - ii. KCI 9.7 - average number of days/shifts lost to sickness by support staff.

39. Service Development Progress Update and 'Our Plan 2018-21' - Actions Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer regarding progress made since September 2018 in delivering projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks included in Appendix A of Our Plan 2018-21. A copy of the report, marked “Agenda Item 10”, is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were made:

- i. It was not possible to extend the Skype for Business project to CFA members, as they did not have an LFRS registered email address;
- ii. The online training for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance was mandatory for all staff; members agreed that it was important for them to also complete the training.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made in delivering the projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks included in Appendix A of Our Plan 2018-21 since September 2018 be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which informed of progress made against the Internal Audit Plan 2018-19. A copy of the report, marked “Agenda Item 11”, is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that there had been further progress since this report for the CGC had been written and this would be reflected in the audit update.

Regarding the High Importance (HI) recommendations, Members were informed that:

- i. Work for the performance monitoring was now complete and a meeting to finalise it had been arranged for 23 November 2018;

- ii. Although testing was completed for procurement, the work was not yet completed and a further update would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee;
- iii. Work to progress actions related to Key ICT Controls was expected to meet the deadline of January 2019; Members welcomed an update on this at the next CGC meeting on 23 January 2019;

The summary presented at paragraph 4.2 in the report was updated verbally to reflect progress made as follows:

<b>Status of work</b>	<b>Additional Commentary</b>
2 to final issued (page 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declaration of Interests/Gifts and Hospitality (19/2)</li> <li>• General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR (19/3)</li> </ul>
5 to draft report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement (19/5)</li> <li>• Fire-fighter Pensions – Roles and Responsibilities (19/11)</li> <li>• Performance Monitoring (19/1)</li> <li>• Key Financials Payroll (19/7)</li> <li>• Key Financials Pensions (19/8)</li> </ul>
5 areas of work in progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMICFRS Readiness Audit (19/4)</li> <li>• Key financial systems (19/6)</li> <li>• ICT controls 2018-19 (19/9)</li> <li>• National Fraud Initiative (19/10)</li> <li>• Fire-fighter Pensions – Pensions Calculations (19/12)</li> </ul>

The revised governance model implemented by the LFRS Senior Management Team to progress the Internal Audit actions was commended.

**RESOLVED:**

That

- a. The progress made against the Internal Audit Plan 2018-19 be noted;
- b. That the report presented to the Committee on progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2018-19 at its next meeting on 23 January 2019 would include detail of progress made with the High Importance Recommendations, particularly related to Key ICT Controls.

41. Update on local preparations for a "No deal" Brexit.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer regarding the current position with local and in-Service planning for a “no deal” Brexit. A copy of the report, marked “Agenda Item 12”, is filed with these minutes.

Members recognised the lack of clarity and uncertainty with Brexit currently and acknowledged that the assessment contained within the report gave reassurance that the potential issues were being explored.

**RESOLVED:**

That

- i. The local multi-agency and Service preparations for a “no deal” Brexit be noted;
- ii. That a report should be presented to the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority on 6 February 2019.

42. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee will be held on Wednesday 23 January 2019 at 2pm at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birstall.

The next meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 12 December 2018 at 10.00am at Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield LE3 8RA.

2.00 - 3.45 pm  
21 November 2018

CHAIRMAN