

Minutes of a meeting of the CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 18 September 2019.

PRESENT

Cllr. K. Bool (in the Chair)

Mr. I. E. G. Bentley CC
Cllr. L. Fonseca
Mr. J. Kaufman CC
Ms. Betty Newton CC

Mr. A. E. Pearson CC
Mr J. Poland CC
Cllr. A. Thalukdar

In attendance

Rick Taylor, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Callum Faint, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Alison Greenhill, Treasurer
Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer
Matt Davis, Internal Audit Leicestershire County Council
Adam Stretton, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Anna Poole, Democratic Services Leicestershire County Council

17. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Councillor S. Barton and Mr. D. Harrison CC.

18. 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.

19. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

20. Chair's Announcements.

The Chairman highlighted the good TV coverage of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) over recent weeks. He especially noted the article on work with schools and on Virtual Reality – for which Leicestershire FRS is the nationwide leader.

21. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

22. Financial Monitoring to the end of July 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 July 2019. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 6" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. It was too early in the financial year to include a forecast of expenditure in the report;
- ii. The review of the establishment position showed that vacancies existed for retained fire fighters. Retention of on-call fire fighters was a national issue, reflected in Leicestershire. Senior officers were exploring different ways to remunerate fire fighters to improve retention rates; the role was set nationally and could not be changed locally;
- iii. Availability of On-call fire fighters had improved; from 50% last year to now over 60%;
- iv. Clarity on funding and grants was still awaited. Receiving a financial settlement for one year only, rather than four years as previously, prevented the ability to forward plan. Having sufficient funding to sustain the delivery of the current Integrated Risk Management Plan was an issue;
- v. The 2% pay award to fire fighters was set by Government; any increase over this amount had to be found within existing fire service budgets;
- vi. The proposed purchase of the Aerial Ladder Platform was required as using the equipment of neighbouring fire services was not a viable option due to unavailability for immediate response. This was included in the IRMP consultation and the public response was awaited.

RESOLVED:

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

23. Performance Monitoring April - July 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 – July 2019. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 7" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. Welfare arrangements had always been in place to support fire fighters who had dealt with suicide attempts;
- ii. The target for primary fires was determined by historical data including previous incident types and levels;
- iii. A workshop on the proposed reporting of key performance indicators would be held for members on 20 November 2019. Input from members on future reporting categories was welcomed;
- iv. Determining targets for KPI reporting was a balance – to have those that were achievable but also challenging. The quality of the data was also explored.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a. the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April 2019 – July 2019 be noted; and
- b. a workshop for members to review the performance measures of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service would be held on 20 November 2019.

24. 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 for 2019-20. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 8" is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the status of work had been updated as follows:

- 3 areas were at final report or draft report stage;
- 6 areas were work in progress.

Of the six areas that were work in progress:

- Risk Management would be covered in quarter 3, at the request of LFRS;
- Contract Procedure Rules – work would start once the revised procedures had established;
- Key Financial Systems, Key Financials Pensions, ICT Controls and Emerging Issues would be addressed in Nov 2019-Jan 2020 once a large sample size was available.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. The outcome of the HMICFRS Inspection had created additional work for the Service which would be further examined at future inspections. A full update would be presented to the CFA at its next meeting and future progress updates would be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee;
- ii. A high level of errors had been identified in the audit of payroll; a meeting would be held with the provider next week to discuss and, although it was not included in the internal audit plan, a further follow-up audit would be undertaken;

RESOLVED:

That:

- a. The update on progress with the Internal Audit Plan 2019-20 be noted; and
- b. A future report on the Progress with the Internal Audit Plan 2019-20 would include an update on the situation with the payroll provider.

25. Organisational Risk Register.

The Committee considered a report of Chief Fire and Rescue Officer of the progress made in the identification, documentation and management of organisational risk. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 9" is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the Risk Assessment Templates were reviewed at regular intervals, and all had an owner assigned.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report and the Organisational Risk Register be noted.

26. Service Development Programme and 'Our Plan 2019-22' - Appendix A Tasks.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer regarding progress made since July 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 10" is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that the proposed go-live date of 1 October 2019 for the Fleet Monitoring System was still on track.

The number of people giving feedback following an incident on the service received from LFRS was less than was hoped, and not as representative of the population as it could be. However, feedback was not sought from all people who used the service; it was unlikely to include those involved in traumatic incidents. It was highlighted that, should people be unhappy with the quality of service required, then the number of responses would probably be higher.

RESOLVED:

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

27. Review of Key Performance Indicator reporting.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning the review of the method of reporting Key Performance Indicators. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 11" is filed with these minutes.

Regarding response times, members were informed that currently this was recorded from the time the fire fighters left the station. It was a proposal within the Integrated Risk Management Plan, that was currently out for consultation, that the response time should be recorded from the moment the emergency call was received. The target response time for incidents with life threatening injuries was 10 minutes; the Service was currently achieving 10 minutes 26 seconds.

As part of the review of the method for reporting Key Performance Indicators, a workshop would be held on 20 November 2019 for members, to help inform discussion and ensure that the KPI reporting met their needs.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a. the work undertaken with the review of the method for reporting performance against the KPIs be noted;
- b. a further report be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 22 January 2020 seeking approval for the revised method of reporting performance against the KPIs; and
- c. a workshop for members to review the performance measures of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service would be held on 20 November 2019.

28. Fire Fighter Recruitment.

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning fire fighter recruitment.

Following concern expressed previously by members, the entry criteria had been modified for this current recruitment round; the requirement for applicants to hold a driving license and to have GCSE maths and english had been lifted to encourage more diverse applicants.

As the recruitment had recently closed, it was too early to see the results of these changes on the establishment. However, it was known that 39 people had applied who would not have been eligible previously.

In response to questions, members were informed that:

- i. The requirement for applicants to live within the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area remained; this also included CV (Coventry) postcodes;
- ii. It was not felt that the removal of the requirement for applicants to hold a driving license may result in future in few fire fighters able to drive appliances, as it was hoped that, once working people would be encouraged to learn to drive;
- iii. The offer of the opportunity to learn to drive an HGV for people who joined the fire service would not be used in marketing due to concern that that may be the only reason people joined.
- iv. The impact of the changes on recruitment would be reviewed following the current recruitment campaign.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update concerning fire fighter recruitment be noted.

29. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee will be held on 20 November 2019 at 2pm at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birstall.

2.00 - 3.32 pm
18 September 2019

CHAIRMAN