



Minutes of a meeting of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CFA - Corporate Governance Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 23 November 2022.

PRESENT

Cllr. K. Bool (in the Chair)

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

Mr. R. Hills CC
Ms. Betty Newton CC
Mr. J. T. Orson CC

In attendance

Callum Faint, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Paul Weston, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Karl Bowden, Interim Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Lauren Haslam, Monitoring Officer
Colin Sharpe, Representing the Treasurer

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Byrne and Mr D Gamble CC.

2. 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.

3. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items.

4. Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman made his announcements which covered the following matters:

- Men's Health Awareness Month
- On-Call Recognition Night
- Service Representation

5. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2022 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

6. Performance Monitoring April 2022 - September 2022.

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 (LFRS) for the period April – September 2022. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 6' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) In response to increased number of fire related incidents attended in July and August 2022, largely as a result of the extreme weather conditions, two Chief Commendations had been awarded in recognition of the hard work undertaken. Public satisfaction in the service remained very high.
- ii) With regard to the total average response times, there had been an improvement. However, a number of challenges still existed and consideration needed to be given to how these could be improved. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer reported that two variable response vehicles had been ordered and these would assist in attending incidents.
- iii) Over the period, there had been two fatalities in fires. Packages were in place to support officers who had attended these fires. In response to a query around after care for officers who had witnessed a suicide, the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer was confident that this was adequate. There were currently temporary health and wellbeing support measures in place, and it was the intention that these would become permanent. Peer support groups were also in place and a large number of managers had now received mental health training to support staff. It was also noted that an external support service was provided and this now encompassed retired officers.
- iv) The number of home fire safety checks undertaken during the period was 6,391, which was significantly higher than the three year average. It was pleasing to note that Leicestershire was the fourth best service in the UK in this area.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Councillor Bool and seconded by Mr Hills CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the performance of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for the period April to September 2022 be noted.

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

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer concerning progress made since July 2022 in delivering 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 7', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) The new high reach appliance had now been delivered and training was underway to enable this to be operational early in the new year.

- ii) Work was being undertaken to redevelop Western Fire and Rescue station and refurbish Market Bosworth Fire station. Both would be completed during 2023. A query was raised around having gender neutral facilities at fire stations as this had previously been an issue for female firefighters, particularly when they were not at their usual station. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer gave assurance that engagement had taken place with the female network to ensure that there was an appropriate level of privacy at stations. Once Western station was complete, other stations would be redeveloped based on this.
- iii) The latest HMICFRS inspection had concluded on 23 June 2022. Initial feedback had been received and a draft report had been issued to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer for his initial comments. The report would be formally published in December 2022. An internal debrief had also taken place which had identified areas for immediate action. A new Community Risk Management Plan would be developed when the final outcome of the inspection was published and would be presented to the CFA at its meeting on 8 February 2023.

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

RESOLVED:

That the progress made since September 2022 in the delivery of projects within the Service Development Programme and the tasks that are included in Our Plan 2020-24 be noted.

8. Progress against the Internal Audit Plan 2022/23.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer concerning the progress made in delivering the Internal Audit Plan 2022-23. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, in particular that:

- a) four audits are complete (three of which are prior year audits); and
- b) three other legacy partial assurance ratings remain outstanding (although substantial progress has been made).

9. Financial Monitoring to the end of September 2022.

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer which presented the financial monitoring to the end of September 2022, along with the key issues arising from the revenue budget and capital programme. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

The revenue position currently showed an overall forecast overspend of £309,000. Savings from the phased recruitment of new posts and the on call being below

establishment had been forecasted. The firefighters' pay award had not yet been agreed but as offered exceeded the budget provision. The pay award for green book staff had recently been agreed and exceeded the budget as anticipated. A number of other areas were showing significant overspends as a result of inflation, in particular energy and fuel.

The capital programme was currently reporting spend of £1,567,000. Slippage of £3,932,000 had been identified and was being kept under review.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) An income shortfall of £47,000 was forecast relating to the Forge Health Ltd dividend. The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer reported that it had been agreed to close this down in the coming months and all contractors had been issued with a 90 day notice period which was currently being worked through. Checks were taking place as to whether any VAT remained to be accounted for and a data handling strategy had been agreed.
- ii) It was noted that there was the potential for strike action over pay for firefighters. However, the Committee was reminded that this was not a local dispute and there was very little LFRS could do to influence the outcome of any ballot.
- iii) Slippage had been identified in the capital programme. In response to a query, it was noted that this would usually be carried forward into the following year's capital programme. Due to rising costs, it would perhaps be necessary to revisit the capital programme in the near future.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Councillor Bool and seconded by Mr Orson CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the revenue budget and capital programme position at the end of September 2022 be noted.

10. Grenfell Action Plan.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer detailing the progress on the actions arising from phase 1 of the Grenfell Inquiry. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were raised:

- i) It was reported that, of the 46 recommendations, the Service had completed 31 areas and a further two were planned for completion by December 2022. The Service had developed procedures and guidance to support differing evacuation strategies, ranging from 'stay put' to 'simultaneous evacuation'. Training of officers to provide specialist support had taken place and tall building exercises were now planned on an annual basis.
- ii) The Committee was informed of a recent high rise building fire at Epic House, Leicester. The outcome of this fire had been positive as a result of the training undertaken and demonstrated how effectively the Service dealt with large scale incidents. It was worthy of note that Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service had

been recognised as leading nationally on high rise fires and had demonstrated a number of examples of best practice. A short video of the fire would be shown at the next meeting of the CFA.

- iii) The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer stated that there were currently live consultations in relation to PEEPs and the Service would be feeding into these to note the challenges to local authorities and building owners.

The recommendation contained within the report was moved by Councillor Bool and seconded by Mr Ghattoraya CC. The motion was put and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made against the actions be noted.

11. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the CFA Corporate Governance Committee will be held on Wednesday 15 March 2023 at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 3.10 pm
23 November 2022

CHAIRMAN

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