

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – MINUTES**

Date: Thursday 11 August 2016

Time: 14:00 – 15.20

Place: Fire Headquarters, Hinchbrook Cottage, Huntingdon

Present: Councillors R Butcher (Chairman), B Ashwood, M Jamil (from 2.05pm), M McGuire, J Peach and J Wisson (from 2.20pm)

In attendance: Councillor S Bywater

Officers: J Anderson - Area Commander Community Safety, H Douglas - Head of Transparency, Media and Communications, C Faint - Area Commander Operational Support, R Greenhill - Democratic Services Officer, D Thompson - Scrutiny and Assurance Manager and M Warren – Deputy Chief Executive

106. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN/ CHAIRWOMAN

It was resolved unanimously that Councillor Butcher be elected Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year 2016-17.

107. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN/ CHAIRWOMAN

It was resolved unanimously to postpone the election of a Vice Chairman/woman of the Committee until the next meeting.
(**Action:** Democratic Services Officer).

108. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported apologies for absence from Shahin Ismail, Monitoring Officer.

(Cllr Jamil joined the meeting).

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

110. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 24 MARCH 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**111. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AGAINST INTEGRATED RISK
MANAGEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

The Committee received a report by the Area Commander for Community Safety setting out performance against Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) targets. In introducing the report he highlighted:

- A 16% increase in the number of accidental dwelling fires on Quarter 1 compared to the same period last year. This type of spike occurred occasionally, but monthly trends across the county in May and June 2016 remained within normal ranges;
- A 26% decrease in deliberate fires in Quarter 1 compared to the same period in 2015, which represented the lowest Quarter 1 total in 6 years;
- A 36% reduction in fire-related casualties in Quarter 1 compared to the same period in 2015;
- No fire fatalities in Quarter 1.

In response to questions, the Area Commander for Community Safety reported that:

- Deaths occurring up to a month after an incident were still counted as fatalities related to that incident;
- Fire related fatalities occurred most frequently within the elderly population whilst non-fatal casualties were seen most often within lower age groups amongst those with chaotic lifestyles;
- Fire safety activity designed to reduce the number of automatic fire alarm (AFA) responses was currently being focused on hospitals and care homes;
- Officers set the performance targets for attendance times for the first and second pumps on scene at an incident. The aspiration remained to have 100% of first pumps arriving on scene in 18 minutes and second pumps within 25 minutes, but the target of achieving these response times in 95% of cases was judged to be more pragmatic whilst still challenging;
- A performance percentage of 93.6% of first pumps arriving on scene in the 2015/16 Call Year had fallen slightly short of the 95% target, but performance was improving in Quarter 1 of the 2016/17 and stood at 94.4% at 31 May 2016;
- Current targets were based on the same standards of fire cover which had preceded the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) targets.

It was resolved to note the contents of the report and the Committee's comments as recorded above.

112. OPERATIONAL COMMAND REVIEW 2016

The Committee received a report by the Area Commander for Operational Support which provided details of a review of operational command provision within Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS). The review sought to ensure the provision of an effective and efficient service which was compliant with new national guidance and legislative requirements regarding incident command in the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) settlement for the period 2016-20 which indicated that the Fire Authority needed to find savings and efficiencies of approximately £3.9 million.

During discussion and in response to questions from members it was noted that:

- During the 10 year period from 2006-16 there had been on average one incident per month requiring the attendance of five or more fire engines;
- The Flexible Duty System (FDS) offered a lean and flexible model of working which got officers to the scene of major and concurrent incidents quickly and which supported a sustained presence over time at these incidents where required;

(Cllr Wisson joined the meeting)

- A collaborative arrangement between CFRS and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service which provided a joined-up approach to rostering and the deployment of strategic command officers at Area Commander level had gone live on 1 June 2016. Discussions about similar arrangements with some other neighbouring counties were also in hand.

It was resolved to support the two recommendations set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report, namely:

1. To maintain the current level of operational command on the FDS rota within CFRS at its current level;
2. To explore whether the six additional Station Commander (SC) posts that were not conditioned to the FDS rota required the post holder to be a SC or if the level of these posts could be reviewed. This would be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when it could be fitted into the work programme.
(**Action:** Scrutiny and Assurance Manager).

113. OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

The Committee received a report written by Assistant Chief Fire Officer Hylton and presented in his absence by the Deputy Chief Executive providing an update on the Operational Assessment Action (Op/A) Plan.

Members reviewed Appendix 1 to the report which provided details of the progress to date against each identified action. In response to questions it was noted that:

- Staff engagement activities had included both frontline operational officers and professional support staff;
- Honorariums were designed to recognise exceptional contributions by specific members of staff;
- Officers did not anticipate any changes to the Op/A Plan if the Police and Crime Commissioner were to take on additional responsibilities in relation to the Fire and Rescue Service, but they did anticipate that it would lead to changes to the peer review process as a result of Inspectorate involvement.

It was resolved to note the contents of the report and the progress made within the action plan.

114. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MEMBER LED REVIEW OF TRANSFER POLICY

The Committee considered the draft terms of reference for a member led review into Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service's transfer policy. The review was being undertaken to establish whether the organisation had incorporated learning from recent experiences relating to transfers and whether the proposed processes were open, transparent, fair and, where applicable, legally compliant.

During discussion members indicated that it would be helpful to postpone the proposed Committee meeting on 8 September 2016 to allow sufficient time for this important piece of work to be completed and a report produced. Cllr Ashwood said that she would be willing to join the Chairman in taking forward this review and Cllr McGuire indicated that he would be willing to be involved if available. Members also welcomed confirmation that Cllr Bywater was willing to support the work of the review group in his capacity as a member of the Fire Authority.

It was resolved to:

1. Agree the draft terms of reference for the member led review of the transfer policy;
2. Postpone the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting planned for 8 September 2016 to a date in October which preceded the meeting of the Fire Authority on 20 October 2016 (Minute 118 below also refers);
(**Action:** Democratic Services Officer);
3. Invite Cllr Bywater to support the work of the review group in his capacity as a member of the Fire Authority;
4. Liaise with the Chairman and Cllrs Ashwood, Bywater and McGuire to agree arrangements for the review.
(**Action:** Scrutiny and Assurance Manager).

115. MEMBER LED REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION FUNCTION

The Chairman invited Cllr Bywater to introduce the report and recommendations which he had produced following a member led review of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) Media and Communication Function.

Cllr Bywater explained that the review had been undertaken to assure Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority that its media and communication function was fit for purpose. To this end it sought factual evidence that the function was operating effectively and efficiently and providing value for money whilst contributing to the strategic aims of CFRS. He offered his thanks to staff in the media and communications team for the information which they provided during the course of review and the manner in which they conducted themselves. He also offered thanks to the Scrutiny and Assurance Manager for her support.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The Head of Group reported to the Chief Fire Officer and was an active member of the Director Advisory Board, enabling them to offer communication advice at a strategic level;
- Three of the four team members provided 24/7 cover through being on call once every three weeks;
- The media and communication function budget had reduced from 1.2% of the total Fire Authority budget in 2010/11 to 0.8% in 2016/17 during a time of increasing public appetite for immediate access to information across a variety of platforms;
- The corporate printing budget had reduced by £27,488 since 2006/7;
- The new website launched in 2015/16 had been financed from an underspend in budget and had represented no additional cost to the Service;
- The Service Excellence Awards evening was now self-funded through sponsorship representing a saving of £8k per annum;
- The media and communications function was key to delivering the CFRS' duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to warn and inform the public of danger;
- Whilst direct comparison with staffing levels in other organisations was difficult to achieve it was notable that Cambridgeshire Constabulary currently employed nine staff within this function with a further three staff employed by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office;
- Work was continuing to establish how best to quantify the reach of the use of social media, but the success of recent campaigns such as '#RememberRony' and its use in the 2014 recruitment campaign to target demographic groups who were under-represented within CFRS suggested it could provide a productive and cost effective communication tool going forward.

The Chairman, seconded by Cllrs Ashwood and McGuire, thanked Cllr Bywater and officers for their comprehensive and informative work on this issue. It was resolved to:

1. Endorse the review's findings and recommendations, as follows:
 - i. Agree that the current structure of the CFRS media and communication function was fit for purpose;
 - ii. Agree that the media and communication team offered value for money and contributed to all four strategic aims;
 - iii. Acknowledge that outputs, whilst not always measurable, indicated that CFRS was reaching a significant number of the communities it served through its communications and representation on various media platforms;
 - iv. Acknowledge the need for continual self-assessment to ensure that value for money was maintained.
2. Endorse the additional recommendation that the Fire Authority consider the value of making the role of Digital Engagement Officer permanent moving forward, whilst noting that this recommendation did not fall within the remit of the review;
3. Present the report to the Fire Authority for information, highlighting that the Committee endorsed all of its findings and recommendations;
4. Endorse officers' suggestion that the report should be shared with local MPs.

(**Action:** Resolutions 3 and 4 above: The Scrutiny and Assurance Manager/ Head of Transparency, Media and Communications).

116. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

The Committee received a report by the Head of Internal Audit setting out their opinion, based upon and limited to work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes for the 12 month period ending on 31 March 2016.

During discussion it was noted that:

- Paragraph 2.2 stated that “follow up of the high and medium priority actions agreed to address previous years’ internal audit findings shows that the organisation had made little progress in implementing the agreed outcomes”. The Deputy Chief Executive said that work had focused on high priority actions and that these were all complete, with work continuing on the remaining medium priority actions. Members felt that this could have been made more clear in the report and indicated that they might wish to discuss this with the Head of Internal Audit at the next meeting;
- The summary of internal audit work completed in 2015/16 at Appendix B showed that all of the areas assessed were found to offer reasonable levels of assurance with risk management offering a substantial level of assurance.

It was resolved to:

1. Note the opinion of the Head of Internal Audit that for the period 2015/16 the organisation had an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control;
2. Note that the Head of Internal Audit had identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remained adequate and effective, and to further note the assurance of the Deputy Chief Executive that work on these areas was being taken forward.

117. INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2016-19

The Committee considered a report setting out the proposed work programme for 2016-17. Members reviewed the planned areas of work set out at Appendix A, noting in particular the inclusion of work on cyber security and the advisory project management review of the Huntingdon Hub.

It was resolved to note the Internal Audit Strategy for 2016-19.

118. WORK PROGRAMME 2016-17

Members reviewed the work programme for 2016-17. The Chairman said that he would be willing to lead the planned review of the disciplinary appeals procedure if he was available, supported by Cllr Jamil.

It was resolved to:

1. Cancel the meeting on 8 September 2016 and arrange an alternative date in October which preceded the Fire Authority meeting on 20 October 2016;
(**Action:** The Democratic Services Officer)
2. Liaise with the Chairman and Cllr Jamil regarding timing of the review of the disciplinary appeals procedure.
(**Action:** The Scrutiny and Assurance Manager).

119. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be arranged for October 2016 and would be held at the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Hinchbrook Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon PE29 2NA.

CHAIRMAN