

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH FIRE AUTHORITY
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: 12th April 2018

Time: 10.30am – 11.35am

Place: Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Hinchbrook Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon

Present: Councillors: S Bywater, D Giles, M Jamil, M Smith, J Peach (Vice Chairman), T Rogers, K Reynolds (Chairman) and M Shellens

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

53. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th JANUARY 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

54. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTE ACTION LOG

There were no comments made on the Action Log

The Minute Action Log was noted.

55. MINUTES OF 29TH MARCH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held 29th March were not yet available.

56. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES 2018-2020

A report was presented which gave the overall direction and priorities for improving equality, diversity and inclusion in both service delivery and workforce for 2018 to 2020.

The strategy and priorities derived largely from the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and data identifying risk and vulnerability in communities within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. They were also influenced by national strategies and legal requirements.

A Member observed that the Action Plan gave aspirational statement but no specific, measurable objectives. Officers acknowledged that that was a reasonable observation, and agreed to include SMART objectives where possible. **Action required.**

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that there was external consultation on the document, including County Councillors, unions and representatives bodies, as well a number of equality and inclusion groups.

Members noted the membership of the Inclusion Steering Group, which was chaired by Alison Scott, and made up of interested staff from all levels, including Station Commanders, firefighters and support staff. Member input was provided by Councillors Jamil and Smith.

A Member queried the statement *"we aim to explore the impact that the menopause may have on staff – particularly on women working in operational roles..."* in the section on Development and Retention. Officers explained that it was relatively recently that there had been a significant number of women firefighters, and as those firefighters age, it was important to understand and support them through this natural life event, e.g. the impact of heat on the body. There was both a moral and legal obligation to take this type of issue into consideration in supporting staff. The Member who had raised this question acknowledged these points, and the importance of not shying away from discussing potentially difficult areas, but stressed the importance of not invading individuals' privacy.

A Member asked about firefighters' attitude to risk as they age, i.e. whether more mature firefighters with families and greater responsibilities were more risk averse than younger colleagues. Officers had not witnessed this type of behaviour, and explained that the training firefighters received meant that they were willing to risk their lives to save lives, although they operated in a command and control environment, where risk was strictly managed.

It was resolved to:

- 1) agree the strategy and priorities appended to the report as Appendix 1.

57. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN REFRESH UPDATE

A report was presented which provided the Committee with an update of the Service's delivery against its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Members were reminded that there was a complete review of the IRMP in

2017: the document presented was not a rewrite, but a refresh, reflecting the actions and risks that had been monitored over the last twelve months.

The IRMP delivery was broken down in to four areas for management and monitoring purposes: Community Safety Excellence, Operational Excellence, People and Value for Money.

Community Safety Excellence achievements included the successful expansion of the “Safe and Well” model to Peterborough, the delivery of six ‘FireBreak’ courses, and a 120% increase in Fire Safety inspections. Six portable misting systems had been installed in homes of highly vulnerable individuals. Operational Excellence achievements included the introduction of two additional appliances seven days a week in rural areas.

In the ‘People’ category:

- the fourth Insight Development programme had been delivered, and opened up to neighbouring Fire authorities and Police colleagues. This cross fertilisation had been very useful;
- eleven apprentices had been taken on this year, and areas had been targeted where it was usually difficult to recruit, e.g. ICT, Fleet and Equipment;
- a high number of female applicants (13%) had applied as part of the Whole-time recruitment campaign. A Member asked if this was specific to this Fire Authority or part of a wider trend? Officers responded that there had been a lot of work to identify barriers, “Have a go” days, and advertisement. Work had been undertaken to try to identify which campaigns were most successful in attracting female and other minority applicants, so that this trend could be maintained. These trends were tracked against the national and family group picture.

Under the Value For Money category, issues such as property and other resource sharing (facilities shared with the Police and Ambulance services, sharing an Area Commander) and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) were the main issues. The Service was taking part in the National Spend Analysis. Good progress had been made in a number of areas.

Members’ attention was drawn to the Performance section of the report, which was reported regularly to the Committee. The 12 minute response target for rural areas was still above target (12 minutes and 29 seconds, compared to a target of 12 minutes), but this was an improvement of 6 seconds from the previous year. More recent data showed that the new roaming pumps were having a significant impact on performance in rural areas. With regard to this, a Member queried whether these additional pumps impacted on the number of calls for retained staff. Officers commented that they were acutely aware of this issue, and were meeting monthly to check what was happening, but data suggested comparatively low numbers of calls for the roaming appliances, and roaming appliance were not being used in areas when retained resources were available.

The total numbers of primary and secondary fires had increased slightly, a trend that had been reflected in neighbouring areas. The number of preventable fires had reduced, as had the numbers of Road Traffic Collisions. With regard to the latter, a Member commented that RTCs were beyond the control of the Service, which was influenced by issues such as weather, and the key for the service was to identify what it could do. Co-responding calls for the East of England Ambulance service were down, although this was not due to any deliberate policy. Diversity had improved, with an increase in the numbers of Black and Minority Ethnic staff, female staff and female operational managers.

Members noted the Risk Review Summary, and material changes within this.

The Chairman thanked officers for their presentation. With regard to FireBreak, he asked if the intention was to maintain or build upon numbers. Officers confirmed that they were looking to expand this scheme, and get more schools and colleges in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough involved.

With regard to the Focus Group research into what BME communities see as risks, officers confirmed that this was internal work which had not been shared externally. The key to addressing these issues was about providing role models and undertaking positive actions on changing perceptions on the risk involved.

It was noted that the 'pulse check employee engagement survey' was a slimmed down version of the Employee Survey, to see how the actions undertaken had impacted on staff.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that whilst there was a statutory responsibility to inspect business premises, the number and frequency of that visiting regime was determined locally. A lot of work had been undertaken around a risk based inspection programme, to ensure the right premises were being targeted with the available resources. In the past the focus had been on those premises where the risk was either high or very high, but medium risk premises (factories, shops, etc) were now also been targeted. Ultimately, the onus was on the occupier of the premises in matters of fire safety, the Fire Service being the auditor and regulator. The 120% increase in inspections being carried out resulted from the short audit and training of operational crews to undertake fire safety inspections: previously front line operational crews did not previously do business engagement, this development had led to a massive increase in capacity.

It was confirmed that whilst there was a list of key areas that the Service would focus on, there were targets within the Service, and reporting mechanisms to ensure that learning was shared and preventative actions were put in place.

Officers explained how the portable misting system worked. It was similar to normal sprinklers but not as extensive, and the system had the added benefit of automatically contacting the Fire Control Room when the misting system was activated. Six mobile units were available and had been allocated to

vulnerable residents suggested by Adult Social Care. There had actually been a fire at the home of one of the six, in Cambridge, and as a result, the fire crew had attended quickly and rescued the gentleman, who was unharmed, with only minimal action required and minor damage sustained. The system did need to be plumbed in and wired up by the community safety team, but it had its own water tank. Members agreed that this was a really good, practical example of how effective Community Safety work and working with partners was making a difference.

A Member asked what the criteria was for selecting the vulnerable adults who had been allocated the portable misting systems, and whether there was scope to expand from the current six units. Officers explained that individuals were identified by the Council's Adult Social Care team, and the number of units was limited by costs. It was confirmed that the Control Room could cope with the additional demand from the units. A Member suggested that this positive news story needed to be reported on in the press and social media, acknowledging that there was a need to balance expectations and demand.

Officers highlighted that crewing levels were based on risk, unlike the Police, which was based on demand. So whilst the number of incidents may be reducing, appropriate crewing levels were based from the following assumptions:

- the ability to respond to 2 x 6 Pump incidents concurrently with two additional appliances for resilience, and;
- the location of those resources, aligning to operational risk highlighted in the Service's IRMP (Stanground, Dogsthorpe, Huntingdon and Cambridge, plus three 'day crewed stations in Wisbech, St Neots and Ely, and on-call stations at Yaxley, Whittlesey, March, Chatteris, Ramsey, Papworth Cottenham, Soham and Sawston. Additional fire appliances provided resilience, being able to relieve crews in incidents, and being available for an exceptional 20 Pump incident.

This was also the minimum cover required in the event of industrial action. Given the nature of this cover, e.g. in terms of being able to relieve other crews, it was no longer necessary to say that firefighters had to live within five minutes of their fire station, or that they were permanently required to respond to an alert.

A Member asked about the fire assessments for schools. Officers advised that operational visits were carried out to schools, which had the dual purpose of fire officers meeting with pupils, and inspection of the premises. The Chairman commented that schools were by their nature low risk, being built for rapid and complete evacuation in an emergency. The Member sought further assurances that those schools located the furthest from fire stations were visited as often. **Action required: Rick/John.**

It was noted that the Kerslake Arena Review, in response to the Manchester Arena attack, had recently been published. Learning points had specifically been identified for the Fire Service and the Greater Manchester Resilience

Forum. CFRS was reviewing the document to identify any learning points, and this would be considered at a future Fire Authority meeting. One specific recommendation related to multi-agency co-location, communication and co-ordination, in line with key principles promoted by the national Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP). JESIP had previously been commissioned by the Home Office to promote inter-agency working practices during the management of large-scale incidents such as the Arena attack. All CFRS managers had been through that programme.

It was resolved to:

Note the contents of the report.

58. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

59. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 26th July 2018, but it was questionable whether the Fire Authority would still exist at that stage. Managers would need to work out how things requiring approval would be signed off, and by whom.

The Chairman advised that following the Secretary of State's announcement on 26th March, advice had been sought from Leading Counsel as to whether there were any opportunities for the Fire Authority to appeal the decision on a legal basis i.e. a Judicial Review. Once a definitive answer had been received, this would be shared with all Fire Authority Members. The Chairman advised that along with the Vice Chairman and Monitoring Officer, he had attended a meeting facilitated by the LGA with other fire authorities and Counsel, to see if there was scope to work collectively on an appeal. However, the other fire authorities were at different stages, so it would be necessary to proceed individually, i.e. as Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority. The timescale was very tight – Judicial Review usually took place within three months from when the decision was made, but given the Parliamentary process, it would need to commence within 4-6 weeks. The Fire Authority could not act without the authority and support of the principal authorities i.e. Peterborough City and Cambridgeshire County Councils. It was confirmed that a budget had been identified for the legal costs, and that these costs would not be coming out of Reserves.

Chairman