

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting

Date: 9 October 2024

Time: 2.00 p.m. – 3.03 p.m.

Venue: New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors C Rae (Chair), S Taylor (Vice-Chair), A Bond, D Dew, I Gardener, J Gowing, R Hathorn and W Fitzgerald.

96. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

The Committee paid tribute to firefighter Mervyn Housden who had sadly passed away recently. Those present stood for a minute's silence.

No apologies for absence were received.

There were no declarations of interest.

97. Minutes – 25 July 2024 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Action Log was noted.

98. Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29 Performance Measures

The Committee received a report on the Service's performance against the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) performance measures.

The Chief Fire Officer provided assurance to Members on the Fire Safety Order following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report. The Service were engaging with the mayor and proactively examining properties that were undergoing the Building Regulations Programme; there was one in Peterborough and 13 elsewhere across Cambridgeshire.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- queried if the 'number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads' could be further categorised to see if there had been an impact in the recent implementation of 20 mph zones. Officers informed Members that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) data would not provide a clear picture of the roads. This would be discussed with the Vision Zero Partnership – **action required.**

- asked for the number of premises inspected to be presented as a number of homes visited rather than a percentage. Officers stated this would be reviewed for subsequent reports - **action required**.
- questioned what 'broadly compliant' meant in relation to fire safety audits and asked for less ambiguous wording to be used in future reports. Officers agreed to review the wording – **action required**.
- learnt that a report would be presented at the Fire Authority regarding Service resilience.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the contents of the performance report in Appendix 1 which covered Quarter 1 of the year 2024/25 (1 April to 30 June 2024).

99. Annual Review – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015

The Committee received the annual update on assurance of compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. The annual review had found that the Service was currently fully compliant with the requirements. The former Information and Governance Manager had resolved one outstanding action regarding salaries and that was now published on the website.

It was resolved unanimously to:

note CFRS was fully compliant with the Transparency Code and all documents were up to date.

100. Internal Audit Progress Report 2024

The Committee received an internal audit report which provided an update on the progress against the audit plan. Two final reports had been issued for Procurement and Management Recruitment Framework. IT Assets were slightly delayed due to sickness but were currently back on track.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- clarified that the Service would be ready for the new Procurement Act deadline in February 2025.
- learnt that unsuccessful candidates were previously receiving constructive feedback in an in-person conversation, however in the future, written feedback would also be provided.

It was resolved unanimously to note the contents of the report.

101. Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

The Committee received the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2023/24. Attention was drawn to the areas where the Authority would continue to take action to deal with governance issues. These included combined fire control, culture, the financial climate and sector developments such as the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Members were informed that a Professional Standards report would be presented at a future Committee. The Fire Authority would receive a report (December 2024) on any CFRS actions following the analysis of the final Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report. This would encompass an update on any necessary actions identified from the Phase 1 Report.

Members were informed that the Integrated Communications and Control System (ICCS) and Mobilising System had successfully gone live on 12 September 2024.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the continued effort to write to the government regarding the financial climate.
- queried when Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) would have their own standalone fire control centre and not be combined with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS). The Chief Fire Officer stated that a new Section 16 had been issued until the 31 March 2025 and any extension past this date would be at the expense of SFRS. Future collaborations were unclear at this time, but the Chief Fire Officer stated the separation would not be the preferred course of action.
- learnt that SFRS would potentially use Motorola Solutions.

It was resolved unanimously to:

having scrutinised the AGS, attached at Appendix 1, and made comment, recommend to the Authority that the AGS is approved for external publication.

102. Draft Fire Authority Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2023-24

The Committee received the draft Fire Authority Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2023/24. Members were informed that the report would be available online and promoted on social media channels. Audit information would be updated following the final accounts and audit statements.

Individual Members raised the following points in relation to the report:

- suggested putting up posters to highlight the dangers of lithium-ion batteries as some people would not be able to access the information online. Officers assured Members that information was circulated via different media channels, such as parish council newsletters and via district council communication channels, especially before Christmas.
- queried if the response times could be clearly emphasised. Members learnt that every month, the previous months statistics were posted via social media channels and would, in the future, include response times.

- praised the two firefighters who ran the London marathon wearing full uniform and raised £3,000 for the Fire Fighters Charity. Members learnt that the Fire Fighters Charity provided support to firefighters and their families. This covered many areas such as residential treatment, counselling and bereavement support.
- highlighted the fire risk of long grass and Huntingdonshire District Council hoped to cut long grass near residential properties to help mitigate the risk.

It was resolved unanimously, having reviewed the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2023/24 to:

approve the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2023/24, attached at Appendix 1, subject to the additions highlighted in Paragraph 4.

103. Member-Led Reviews Update

The Committee received a verbal update on the three Member-led reviews.

'Employee Recruitment and Retention (On-Call)' An initial meeting with officers had been conducted and data had been requested from Human Resources to help inform the review. The focus would initially be on recruitment and then retention. The next meeting had been scheduled.

'Impacts of Planning and Growth on the Service' Information from central government and all local councils was being collated with a view of identifying the overall plan for growth within Cambridgeshire. This was both complex and time consuming.

'TRiM Replacement' Key project documents had been reviewed and the lead Member had met with the project manager. Further meetings with key officers would be scheduled.

Members thanked the Scrutiny and Assurance Manager for their work on the reviews.

104. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee noted its work programme.

Chair