

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority
Public Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting

Date: 26th April 2023

Time: 2.00pm – 3.08pm

Place: Fire HQ, Huntingdon

Present: Councillors: S Bywater, B Goodliffe (Chair), M Jamil (Vice Chair), D Dew, E Murphy, D Over, K Reynolds, P Slatter and M Smith

Officers: Jon Anderson, Shahin Ismail, Tamar Oviatt-Ham, Stuart Smith, Chris Strickland, Deb Thompson and Matthew Warren

37. Apologies for absence and declarations of interest

No apologies received or declarations of interest made.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Doug Dew to the Committee and thanked Councillor Michael Atkin for his time as a member of the Committee.

38. Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held 31st January 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2023 were approved as a correct record.

39. Action Log

The action log was noted. All actions were completed or in hand.

40. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report

Members considered an update on revenue and capital spending as of 31 March 2023.

Members noted:

- The report was still subject to year-end changes and a full update would be given, including any carry overs, in the report to Committee in June.

- The impact of pay award was highlighted in appendix 1 of the report and showed an overspend of 2%. This followed through to the control and local government staffing but not through to professional staffing as there had been a significant turnover in this area over the last year.

Arising from the report:

- A member queried why the rent and rates line was showing as red. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer explained that this was largely due to business rates and officers were currently reviewing where rates were being paid.

It was resolved unanimously to note the position on revenue and capital spending.

41. Commercial and Procurement Activity – Annual Update

The Committee considered an update on the commercial activity of the organisation for the financial year 2022/23 (including exemptions), the key priorities for 2023/24 and an overview of changes to public procurement.

Members noted:

- Three category leads had been established, leading on specific elements of the service and this had created greater resilience within the team.
- A pipeline approach was used as best practice, and this allowed officers to establish, in good time, when contracts were coming to an end. Members noted that the PPE contract was coming to an end and that there would be an extensive piece of work carried out in relation to the retendering process.
- A new procurement act was being introduced by Government and there would be a focus around sustainability.
- The exemption process was only used in exceptional circumstances.

Arising from the report:

- A member queried if the waivers could be published on the Fire Authority Website. Officers stated that they could append the list of waivers to the regular report and that they could also publish them on the website. **ACTION**

- A member questioned whether there was a cost limit in relation to waivers. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer stated that waivers could be approved by the Chair of the Fire Authority on amounts over £50,000 and there was no limit. He clarified however that there were very strict criteria in relation to whether a waiver could be taken and that they would not be taken if the reasons were avoidable.
- A member sought clarity on any supply chain issues the authority were experiencing or would experience going forwards. The Deputy Chief Executive Officer explained that there would be challenges going forwards in relation to the supply of PPE in particular the BA set valves and lease cars. He explained that officers had established good lead in times to account for these difficulties. The Head of Commercial and Business Support explained that there was a risk register for the procurement of all contracts and that any issues were raised at regular contract review meetings. The Chief Fire Officer highlighted that the procurement team had significant influence on the National Fire Authority Council in relation to procurement and had been involved in work at a national level in relation to the training framework, pre-hospital emergency medicine, the apprenticeship framework and contingent labour.

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

42. Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-29

Members considered an update on the creation of the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2024/29 and seek approval for our CRMP creation plans.

Members noted:

- The risk management plan was reviewed every 3-5 years. Officers were currently going through the process of collecting and analysing data.
- The report outline the timescales of the review and consultation process on the risk management plan.
- Consultation on the plan would be carried out through community forums and then the plan would be brought back to committee for approval in November 2023. The diagram at 9.4 of the report outlined the consultation timescales. Officers stated there was a possibility

there might be a delay in bringing the plan to Committee for approval due to the tight timescales for consultation.

- The plan was due to go live on 1 April 2024.
- The Chief Fire Officer stated that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had given positive feedback on the process in the inspection report for 2021-22.

Arising from the report:

- A member sought further information on the consultation process in relation to the community engagement forums. The reporting officer explained that there were over 200 people on the fire authorities social media network and that the service had established connections through partner organisations with hard to reach groups. The reporting officer stated that they also used the nextdoor app as well as facebook and tiktok to engage with individuals.
- A member queried whether officers had an idea of the number of responses they would receive through the consultation process. The reporting officer explained that through the first round of engagement in May-July through social media etc they expected to receive a good response rate. The reporting officer stated that through the second round when the formal consultation took place in November - January they generally receive around 30-40 formal responses.
- The Chair queried whether any engagement was carried out through the library service and a member also commented that members of the fire authority should be engaged to help increase engagement with the consultation. The reporting officer explained that they would contact members of the fire authority to see how they could support the engagement process. **ACTION**
- A member queried if there was any overlap with engagement on flood risk and rescue that could be utilised to help further engagement. The reporting officer explained that they worked closely with the Districts and County Council in this area and that as part of the safe and well visits that the fire authority carry out they discuss flood risk with individuals. They also work closely with the Environment Agency.

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the contents of this report and make comment as they deem appropriate;
2. approve the approach to Community Risk Management Plan creation.

43. Efficiency Plan 2023-24

Members considered an overview of the Efficiency Plan for 2023/24.

Members noted:

- The service had worked hard over the last few years to prepare for potential financial challenges including extensive financial business continuity planning. The
- Government had provided fire and rescue authorities with the ability to increase its Band council tax by £5 and the increase in Cambridgeshire meant that, whilst efficiencies had been identified further cuts had been avoided.

It was resolved unanimously to note the plan and the compliance action, taken on behalf of the Authority, by the Service.

44. Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) Strategy

The Committee considered an update on update the Policy and Resources Committee on the strategy to reduce the burden of unwanted fire signals (UFS), and the Service's reporting of automatic fire alarms (AFA's) to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Members noted:

- A policy was already in place for non-attendance of AFAs during the period of 09:00 and 17:00 hours, Monday to Friday, for some none domestic premises (namely shops and offices) and this change had been made historically based on data and to improve efficiency and effectiveness when delivering services to the public.

- As part of the Operational Response Review project data had been reviewed to understand what capacity any additional policy change would create.
- It was intended to extend the AFA non-attendance policy between the hours of 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday for the following additional premises:
 - Hospitals and hospices
 - Houses of multiple occupancy
 - Prisons and secure accommodation
 - Hostels
 - High rise buildings
- Officers had been consulting extensively with all of the bodies potentially affected by the change.

Arising from the report:

- A member sought further clarity in relation to vulnerable adults in high rise buildings and whether AFAs would be attended in such cases. The reporting officer explained that individual flats with AFA in high rise buildings would be treated as private residential properties so would be attended. If an AFA was activated in a communal area during the proposed times then this would be subject to the double knock system.
- A member commented that the additional premises added to the policy were public organisations and queried how regularly their fire procedures were checked. The reporting officer explained that there was a risk based inspection programme in place and public organisations were inspected on a regular basis and should they have a particular issue then the service would reserve the right to attend the premises.
- A member queried if schools were attended automatically. The reporting officer stated that education settings had not been attended automatically for a number of years.
- A member expressed their concern regarding the communications associated with the change in policy and how this would be publicised as the policy could be easily misinterpreted. The reporting officer explained that it was the onus of the responsible person at each premises to ensure fire procedures were in place and followed.

Officers had spoken to all responsible persons in relation to the change in policy and were supporting them.

- A member asked for more detail to be included in the communication of the changes in policy to ensure that it was clear to the general public why the changes were being made and plans in place to mitigate any risks. The reporting officer clarified that a detailed communications plan had been developed and agreed to share this with members.

ACTION

It was resolved unanimously to:

1. note the content of this report and in particular the risk assessment,
2. endorse the policy change detailed at Paragraph 8 of the report.

45. Work Programme

Members noted the forward Work Programme.

46. Overview & Scrutiny Committee minutes for 19th January 2023

Members note the Overview & Scrutiny Committee minutes of 19th January 2023.

47. Exclusion of Press & Public

It was resolved unanimously that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the agenda contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

49. Site of the former Huntingdon Fire Station

The Committee received an update on progress with the sale of the old Huntingdon Fire Station site.

It was resolved unanimously to note the current position.