

## Fire Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Date: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Time: 14:00 – 14:40

Venue: Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

Present: Councillors Bond, Gardener, Gowing, Kindersley (Chair), McGuire (attended virtually), Taylor (Vice-Chair),

### 13. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

No apologies or declarations of interest were received.

### 14. Minutes – 21 July 2021 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The action log was noted.

### 15. IRMP Performance Measures

The Committee received a report which reviewed the Service's progress over a four-year period using risk modelling, data from the national risk register and business delivery risks. It highlighted potential initiatives to mitigate weaknesses.

The Officer highlighted some positive statistics, such as: 28 fewer fires, 79 fewer secondary fires and 11 fewer fire injuries in comparison with the previous year. No deaths from fires were reported.

There had been an increase of road traffic collisions, with 20 more persons killed or injured on roads in this reporting year. Officers noted that this upsurge had been affected by the impact of the pandemic on travel in 2020. Requests for ambulance service aid had also increased as a result of pressures on the NHS from the pandemic.

Officers recognised that, despite improvements in workforce diversity (an increase in female staff and staff from black and ethnic minority backgrounds) further diversification was needed. They explained that they had employed an Equality and Diversity Advisor and were benchmarking against other services to ensure this.

Members thanked the Service for assisting with flooding, especially in Alconbury and Alconbury Weston.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the contents of the performance report.

### 16. Annual Review of Compliance with Local Government Transparency Code

The Committee received a report which reviewed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority's compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code, published in February 2015 by the Department for Communities and Local Government. In particular, the Officer highlighted Paragraph 7 which commented on missing contracts data, some of which had been delayed due to the pandemic, and the presentation style of the published organisational chart.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- Note the current position in terms of compliance,
- Approve the recommendation made at Paragraph 7.5.

## 17. Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

The Committee received the Annual Governance Statement which evaluated the extent to which the Authority had complied with their own code of governance over the past year and the effectiveness of that code in ensuring good governance in the Authority. The audit raised no significant concerns and Officers reported that they had maintained this status by ensuring they remained aligned with national guidance and monitoring significant investments in training and the wider property portfolio.

In response to Members' questions, Officers explained:

- That audit and governance was managed collectively.
- That historical training centre building schemes were in the public domain and updated accordingly. The Service was liaising with Huntingdonshire District Council with regard to training centre planning evaluation.
- That the Human Resources Training, Recording and Competency Review had been a separate report from Human Resources and had been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee previously. However, Members were welcome to organise a meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive, Matthew Warren, to discuss further progress that had been made.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- Scrutinise the AGS, attached at Appendix 1 and make comment as appropriate,
- Recommend to the Authority that the AGS is approved for external publication.

## 18. Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee received a report which identified areas of weakness in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Asset & Fleet Management system and consequent actions required to mitigate them. The audit concluded there were adequate controls in place with respect to schedule of works, including a planned maintenance date populated within Miquet and confirmed, from our sample of assets, that barcodes were

present to allow scanning of assets for inventories. In addition, governance arrangements were in place to manage asset and equipment issues.

The audit found areas that could be improved in relation to policies and defined responsibilities, including purchasing, testing, maintaining assets and disposals, missing information on the system in relation to end of life, purchase date, cost and location. Lack of regular stock checks, improvements to disposals records

The Officer noted changes in the audit plan including delays and postponements in training centre and Incident Command System Mobilising System implementation.

In response to Members' comments, Officers explained:

- MiQuest:

MiQuest was a new 'off-the-shelf' system. The failure of the MiQuest system to register disposals of over £10,000 was an oversight in the system's initial implementation and an action plan had been formed to resolve this, with a specific manager overseeing the project.

Operational staff were responsible for inputting data into MiQuest. These staff were busy during the pandemic and therefore human error was more likely to occur during this period. However, Officers were working to ensure all staff were able to use the system.

- 'End of depreciation' and 'end of life' were not the same. This was because an asset's 'end of life' was initially five years but could be extended if still fully functioning.
- A follow up audit would be completed by RSM (internal auditors). The outcome(s) would be presented to the Committee at the end of the financial year, in April 2022.
- The £20,000 MiQuest system update was no longer required.

In summing up, the Chair commented that issues raised in internal audits served as proof that the audit was successful.

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

## 19. Overview and Scrutiny Member-Led Review – Terms of Reference

The Committee received a report which sought two Members for a Member-led Review on the Estates, Property Management and Capital Programme. Review objectives were an evaluation of: internal audit report outcomes and actions; portfolio management and improvement; use of risk based data; the forward plan for investments and collaboration.

Members recognised the requirement for the review to focus on property and spending prioritisation rather than cost cutting measures.

Councillors Gardener and Gowing volunteered to lead the review.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) approve the Terms of Reference for the Member-led review of Estates, Property Management and Capital programme;
- b) to appoint two Councillors to undertake the review.

20. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee resolved unanimously to note its Work Programme.

Chair