

Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

14 September 2023 – At a meeting of the Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee held at 2.15 pm at County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Boram (Chairman)

Cllr Pendleton, Cllr Bence (left at 15.08), Cllr Chowdhury, Cllr Duncton and Cllr Albury

Apologies were received from Cllr Joy and Cllr Patel

Also in attendance: Cllr Crow, Sabrina Cohen-Hatton (Chief Fire Officer), Mark Andrews (Deputy Chief Fire Officer) and Peter Rickard (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)

12. Declarations of Interest

12.1 None.

13. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

13.1 Resolved – that the Committee agrees the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2023 and that they be signed by the Chairman.

14. Responses to Recommendations

14.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the responses.

15. Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Quarter 1

15.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes).

15.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -

- 'Very High Risk' and 'High Risk' Safe & Well visits are defined by customer vulnerability criteria established by a questionnaire conducted by the Service's prevention team, the more dependencies a person has, the more they could be at risk from fire
- Fire fighters who fail the fitness test are helped back to the standard required by physical training instructors and the use of gym equipment at fire stations
- CM17 'Average time between Joint Fire Control Room receiving the emergency call and the station being notified' target may be reviewed and may change as a result
- The outcomes of relevant conferences, such as the recent staff conferences held by the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) will be included in the annual statement of assurance, where appropriate
- Fire fighters who have witnessed traumatic events or incidents receive psychological support from trained FRS staff,

occupational health and the employee assistance programme. The Service monitors offers of help to pick up on staff that decline

- There is a national working group looking into the safety of Battery Energy Storage Systems. The FRS is not a statutory planning consultee, but acts proactively with planning authorities to highlight risks and make sure it has the appropriate plans to deal with any incidents that could arise from problems with these storage systems
- There was a query as to the diversity of the latest intake of new fire fighters **Action:** The Chief Fire Officer to report back to the Committee
- The FRS expects 100% of adequate crewing on all immediate response frontline fire engines. Problems can occur when last minute changes due to sickness or other absence lead to the reported figure showing less than 100% when in fact all these short term absences are covered at the station but on occasion do not get recorded on the system.
- The CM10 target 'percentage of Fire Safety Order regulated buildings having received an audit' is higher than the national average and concentrates on those buildings most at risk

15.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Asks the Fire & Rescue Service to consider whether a breakdown of the figures contained in Core Measure 17 could be provided to the public
- ii. Supports information from key events, such as the Proud to Serve conference, being part of the Statement of Assurance
- iii. Requests that a diversity breakdown be provided on the recently appointed wholetime firefighters

16. End of June 2023 (Quarter 1) Quarterly Performance and Resources Report

16.1 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes).

16.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -

- The Community Risk Management Plan covers flood defences to protect infrastructure susceptible to flooding and the Service also holds regular team meetings that discuss weather related risks

16.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Officially thanks Wilmot Dixon for its significant contribution to the Horsham Fire Station and Training Centre and for completing the project early
- ii. Asks the Fire & Rescue Service to continue to consider weather related risks in relation to its work

17. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

17.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

18. Work Programme

18.1 The Committee considered its draft Work Programme and made the following suggestions: -

- To consider use of equipment/apparatus as part of the member session scheduled for February 2024
- For the Chairman of the Committee to consult with the Chief Fire Officer on available budgets and work relating to flooding by the Fire and Rescue Service
- For the retained firefighters item scheduled for the November 2023 meeting to consider work from a national perspective

18.2 Resolved – that the Committee agrees its draft Work Programme.

19. Date of Next Meeting

19.1 The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 30 November 2023 at 2.15pm.

The meeting ended at 3.29 pm

Chairman