

Fire and Rescue Services Scrutiny Committee

18 March 2020

Fire and Rescue Performance and Assurance Framework

Report by Chief Fire Officer

Summary

West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) was inspected in November 2018 by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). Following publication of the report, the service has been working hard on delivering improvements including looking at how the service manages performance. On the 2nd of March, WSFRS formally adopted a new Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF). This report provides a context to this work for the purpose of future scrutiny of the Executive's approach to performance. The PAF ensures the service is intelligence- and evidence-led and therefore has the ability to react early when performance is not to the required level.

The focus for scrutiny

The framework will enable scrutiny of the decisions of Cabinet and the Cabinet Member. In future, the framework will be supported by a series of Core Indicators.

Scrutiny Members are invited to;

1. Support the adoption of the PAF for scrutiny purposes.
2. Request the Cabinet Member to confirm the Core Measures/Indicators which provide assurance concerning the delivery of the statutory functions of the Fire Authority and how this will work.
3. Identify the type of Core Measures/Indicators which may require particular focus through scrutiny.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

- 1.1 West Sussex County Council is the Fire Authority. It is responsible for making sure West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS) performs efficiently and in the best interest of the public and communities it serves.
- 1.2 WSFRS exists and operates within a legislative framework which is described in detail in Appendix B.
- 1.3 WSFRS was inspected in November 2018 by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The full Inspection Report for the service was published on 20 June 2019. The report found that

- effectiveness of WSFRS “requires improvement”, efficiency “requires improvement” and the way it looks after its people is “inadequate”.
- 1.4 New scrutiny governance arrangements are now in place through the Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee.
 - 1.5 On behalf of residents, Members are responsible for ensuring that WSFRS delivers excellent services and achieves outcomes as efficiently and effectively as possible. This involves the West Sussex County Council Fire Authority (WSCCFA):
 - setting a high-level policy agenda (Strategic Objectives) for what the WSFRS should do and the outcomes it should achieve
 - setting a budget to fund delivery of the policy agenda
 - securing assurance that the budget is being spent wisely on delivering the policy agenda set by the authority.
 - 1.7 In order to secure assurance, it is necessary for effective scrutiny to be an integral component of WSCCFA governance arrangements.
 - 1.8 The role of scrutiny is also to contribute to the development of solutions and ideas to support continuous service improvement. The Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee may need to be flexible in the way it scrutinises the service and the Executive’s decisions. On occasions, Members may wish to ‘drill down’ on certain specific issues but still at a strategic level with the focus being the interests of all West Sussex residents and businesses.
 - 1.9 On an ad hoc basis, it may be appropriate for a small number of the Members to work together as a sub-group with a specific ‘task and finish’ terms of reference looking at a particular thematic area or issue.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Performance and Assurance Framework (PAF) will help Scrutiny Members to shape their role and ensure a comprehensive approach to monitoring the service to ensure effective oversight.
- 2.2 The core purpose of the PAF is to ensure organisational aims and objectives are achieved. The full PAF can be found as Appendix A.
- 2.3 It will enable the service to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner. This will allow the organisation to respond and make informed decisions to ensure that the statutory obligations and functions plus the fire authority’s strategic commitments are being successfully delivered.
- 2.4 Within WSFRS, the strategic owner of the PAF will be the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.5 Responsibly for the implementation and effective management for the PAF will be the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. This will include Chairing the Strategic Performance Board (SPB) and conducting performance discussions with Heads of Service/Functional Heads.
- 2.6 In order to provide a detailed picture of performance the service will measure and, monitor data and information into the following 4 sections:
 1. **Service Provision**
 2. **Corporate Health**
 3. **Priority Programmes**
 4. **Risk**
- 2.7 The above 4 sections will be defined as follows:
- 2.8 **Service Provision** - all data, information and measures to monitor how it is doing at delivering against the statutory functions/obligations. It will also cover any internal services provided between teams/department/functions such as core support in relation to HR. This section will also monitor

performance of formal and informal Shared Services arrangements provided by or to WSFRS for example Joint Fire Control delivered by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, in relation to call receipt and mobilisation.

- 2.9 **Corporate Health** - all data to monitor how they are managing their key resources e.g. people and finance.
- 2.10 **Priority Programmes** - Priority Programmes are identified by the Chief Fire Officer to monitor progress of discrete areas of work that are designed to deliver a defined outcome which is different to or improves on current working practices/policies/procedures. Examples would be a fundamental service review or thematic activity.
- 2.11 **Risk** - all data and information that provides an assessment of service risks that may impact on the delivery of the service. This section will also include the data and information from any audit monitoring. This approach will also enhance the current arrangements in relation to WSFRS 'feeding in' to the Corporate Risk Register
- 2.12 Measures will fall into two categories and the data will usually be reported within either Service Provision or Corporate Health. The two categories are:
- **Core Measures** - measures that provide strong indication of organisational performance directly aligned to the delivery of the Strategic Commitments i.e. Integrated Risk Management Plan
 - **Service (Plan) Measures** - supporting measures that provide an indication of performance that are aligned to the delivery of Functional Service Plan objectives which support delivery of the Strategic Commitments and statutory functions.
- 2.13 It is suggested that Fire and Rescue Scrutiny should focus on a group of Core Measures which provide clear and triangulated performance evidence against the Service Provision and Corporate Health areas.
- 2.14 As one of the main roles of scrutiny is to ensure the statutory functions of the Fire Authority are being appropriately discharged the focus of the Core Measures should be centred around the following;
- **Prevention** – trying to prevent emergencies from happening in the first place making West Sussex a safer place.
 - **Protection** – ensuring that fire safety standards in buildings are appropriate ensuring businesses are safer when people use them.
 - **Response** – minimising the impact of emergencies through well-trained, well-equipped firefighters, responding to them quickly and effectively.
 - **Fire Control** – ensuring 999 calls are dealt with quickly and resources allocated to emergencies
 - **Customer/Service User Feedback** – ensuring the end user is satisfied with the service provided by the County Council.
 - **Human Resources/Learning and Development** - A significant amount of the Fire and Rescue Service budget is invested into the employment of personnel and training. Through Corporate Health, scrutiny may also wish to receive reassurance through Core Measures to ensure operational personnel are fit and competent.

3. Resources

- 3.1 The Committee will need to ensure that the performance management arrangements and the resources to support them are available to ensure the expectations of the Committee are met and that there is no duplication or unnecessary diversion of resources from the core performance management tasks.

4. Other Implications

- 4.1 Further implications are not required to be analysed for this report and going forward these will be detailed as part of the reports going forward once the performance indicators have been identified by the Committee.

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Appendices

Appendix A - WSFRS Performance and Assurance Framework

Appendix B - The Legislative Overview

Appendix C - Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Potential Performance Measurement Targets/Areas