

Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

4 March 2022 – At a meeting of the Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester, PO19 1RQ.

Present: Cllr Boram (Chairman)

Cllr Pendleton, Cllr Chowdhury, Cllr Dunn, Cllr Milne and Cllr Albury

Apologies were received from Cllr Charles

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

33. Declarations of Interest

33.1 No declarations were made.

34. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

34.1 Resolved – that the Committee agrees the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022.

35. Responses to Recommendations

35.1 Resolved – that the Committee notes the responses to the recommendations.

36. Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Quarter 3 2021/22

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

36.2 Summary of responses to committee members' comments and questions: -

- Premises that have unsatisfactory inspections may be issued with deficiency notices which can lead to prosecutions
- The Service presents data in a transparent, realistic way so that people can judge its effectiveness. This data identifies past and future trends and is used to develop the Communities Risk Management Plan (CRMP)
- The CRMP is used to determine where to place appliances throughout the county
- The Crewing Optimisation Group aims to maximise crewing levels across the service and its availability is proposed to increase from five to seven days a week
- Rural areas are targeted for prevention work and are seen as low risk as they are not densely populated and have little industry
- As part of the focus on rural areas, a rural liaison officer is being appointed

- The Dynamic Cover Tool (DCT) ensures that the closest appliance attends an incident – next quarter should see improvements in first and second appliance response times as a result of DCT usage
- Retained fire fighter availability has improved thanks to actions such as the introduction of retained liaison officers and more driver/trainers. The Service is also looking at more structural ways to improve retained fire fighter availability
- The direction of travel of performance indicators relating to the next quarters data were difficult to show in the Performance and Assurance Framework as the data would not yet be collected
- The CRMP proposes to increase fire cover at weekends which should lead to an improvement in average response times by one minute in Mid Sussex and 34 seconds overall
- The increase in the number of unsatisfactory audits shows that targeting premises is working well
- The Service plans to use station-based staff to do audits of low risk premises (enabling more to be done next year) with specialists concentrating on high-risk premises

36.3 Resolved – that the Service examines if the Performance and Assurance Framework can provide more information within the report on the direction of travel for performance indicators.

37. End of December 2021 (Quarter 3) Quarterly Performance and Resources Report

37.1 The Committee scrutinised a report by the Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed copy of the minutes).

37.2 Summary of responses to Committee members' questions and comments: -

- The Service worked proactively with other agencies to identify vulnerable groups (including people living in sheltered accommodation) to prioritise them for safe and well visits - over 3,000 visits were carried out in a year
- The Service has access to data from the NHS about vulnerable people and is working on a scheme to link into other care providers' data
- Changes to technology and team structures when moving to the Joint Fire Control Centre had taken longer than anticipated leading to increased costs/overspend in the Electronic Services Group budget, but overall savings have been delivered through having a Joint Fire Control Centre

37.3 Resolved – that the Service provides details on the overall budget for the Electronic Services Group to members that requested it.

38. Priority Programme Update

38.1 The Service had the resources to build an environment and strong teams where people feel able to challenge and share issues – this is a priority in the CRMP.

38.2 Resolved – that the Committee notes the progress reported in relation to the priority programmes.

39. Joint Fire Control Centre Update

39.1 All partner chief fire officers met regularly to ensure new systems were thoroughly tested before they went live.

39.2 The Service's pandemic response was referenced in the CRMP and an action plan for future similar situations existed.

39.3 Any dip in performance that could cause an operational problem would be reacted to at once.

39.4 The DCT uses real time journey data which will improve accuracy for response time targets which will be updated annually.

39.5 Performance measures had been revised so that all fire services using the JFCC had the same targets.

39.6 Resolved - that the Committee: -

- i. Agrees that the planned development of the Joint Fire Control Centre collaboration project had been delivered
- ii. Supports the consequential changes to the Performance and Assurance Framework

40. Work Programme Planning and Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

40.1 The Committee considered its work programme and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and requested a future update on the change in culture within the Service and the Service's Covid recovery plan.

40.2 Resolved – that the Committee asks that: -

- i. Officers work with the Chairman to establish a potential timeline for the Committee to consider creating psychological safety in all aspects of work as part of the Leadership & Cultural Change Programme
- ii. The item on the Work Programme on Covid-19 is considered separately by the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee in order to reflect on lessons learned

41. The Retained Duty System Task and Finish Group Draft Terms of Reference

41.1 Resolved – that: -

- i. The Committee agrees the Terms of Reference of the Retained Duty System Task and Finish Group
- ii. The following members volunteered to be part of the Task and Finish Group – Cllr Boram, Cllr Pendleton, Cllr Albury, Cllr Chowdhury and Cllr Milne

42. Date of Next Meeting

- 42.1 With the agreement of the Committee, the meeting scheduled for 13 June 2022 will be cancelled and its business postponed to 7 July 2022 so that the Committee can consider the end of year Performance Resources Report together with the Performance and Assurance Framework.

The meeting ended at 12.46 pm

Chairman