

## **Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee**

13 June 2018 – At a meeting of the Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee held at 10.30 am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Barrett-Miles (Chairman)

Mr S J Oakley, arrived at 11.20am	Mr Jones, arrived at 10.45am	Mr Purchase
Mr Baldwin	Mr McDonald	Mrs Purnell, arrived at 1.25pm
Lt Col Barton	Mr Oppler, arrived at 11am	
Mrs Brunsdon	Mr Patel	

Apologies were received from Mrs Bridges

Also in attendance: Ms Goldsmith and Mr Lanzer

### **Part I**

#### **12. Declarations of Interest**

12.1 In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following personal interests were declared:

Mr Baldwin as a member of the Executive Task and Finish Group (TFG) in relation to Bus Strategy 2018-2026

Mr Purchase as a member of Littlehampton Town Council in relation to Bus Strategy 2018-2026

#### **13. Fire & Rescue Service: Integrated Risk Management Plan**

13.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director and Director of Operations and Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to signed minutes). The timing of this item was delayed due to webcasting technical reasons.

13.2 Gavin Watts, Director of Operations and Chief Fire Officer and Neil Stocker, Director of Public Protection and Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the report which gave an overview of the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2018-22 which assessed all foreseeable risks communities face within West Sussex. A consultation of the draft took place between 16 April and 28 May 2018 which involved stakeholders, staff and the public, with all responses now received. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) was now in a position to publish the final version of the IRMP 2018-22. Key points were:

- There were 5 priorities in the IRMP for WSFRS, which was part of the journey for the Service to be more visible, open and transparent. The priorities were similar to those proposed in the FRS National Framework, with a focus on the way residents were looked after.

- The consultation process involved the extensive use of social media, organisational contacts, drop in events, engagement with staff, and with local district, borough and parish councils. The main themes to arise from the consultation included crewing levels, value for money and capacity to deliver action plans.
- Next steps included a decision by the Cabinet Member for Safer Stronger Communities in late June / early July and then a first year action plan to be developed and brought back to the Committee at its meeting in September.

*13.3 Ms Goldsmith, Leader, substituted for the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger, Communities and thanked officers for their time and effort in producing the IRMP document. She highlighted the need to ensure the County Council was ready for the upcoming autumn inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).*

13.4 Representatives of 2 of the main fire service unions were in attendance to address the Committee:

*13.5. Gary Locker, South East Regional representative from the Fire Officers Association (FOA), thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak. He declared an interest for his role in risk and improvement within the FRS and advised that the view of the FOA was not influenced by his role.*

*13.6 The FOA supported the reform within the FRS and broadly agreed with the plans presented in the IRMP. A main concern was over the ability to deliver the 61 projects that arose from the plans, in addition to usual FRS business. It was felt to be impossible to deliver with current resources and even though the FOA accepted it would cover a 4 year period, it believed that without sufficient investment or support, service and delivery of projects could be affected. FOA thought this to be an ambitious IRMP but with the right resources behind it would make residents and the community much safer, so the Association asked the Committee to consider the significant amount of work underlying it.*

*13.7 Joe Weir, Fire Brigades Union (FBU) echoed the points above but opposed the IRMP. The FBU had serious concerns including the planned reduction of fire officers and fire vehicles, which in their view would hamper safety standards. Also that a reduced crew of 4 fire officers would be less resilient and not cost effective for the Service. They thought the IRMP was unachievable and unobtainable and felt that it should highlight the true cuts to service that were planned.*

13.8. The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the draft IRMP as a framework for future work but queried whether the Service had the ability and capacity to deliver the action plans and how this would be monitored.

- Questioned whether the FRS understood the risk profiles in the plans and were supportive of the development of a more diverse workforce, including both older and retained fire officers and the issue of staff recruitment and retention. An officer advised that a suitable assessment of risk had been carried out and the FRS were developing a workforce strategy which would be part of the presentation in September to Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee (ECFSC). There was a challenge around an older workforce where experience was lost, but it was recognised that there was a need for improved fitness facilities for staff and barriers and blocks that may deter new applicants were also being looked at.
- Raised concerns over the issue of appliance crewing numbers proposed reduction from 5 to 4 officers as standard, although recognised that each incident was assessed individually. An officer advised that any changes would be consulted on and protocols developed. 4 officer crews were currently in operation with safe systems in place, so it was a case of using resources more effectively and not reducing numbers.
- Noted the low response rate to the consultation was disappointing, but highlighted the importance of collaboration with other blue light services. An officer advised that the FRS currently had good working relationships with other local fire authorities such as East Sussex County Council, Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council, with good evidence of achievements already.
- Raised concerns over the impact of response times on businesses and suggested that the IRMP was a recipe for cuts rather than improving efficiency and that its aspirational nature should warrant further investment in the service.

*13.9 Ms Goldsmith added that investment in new equipment had already taken place this year, including the purchase of a new platform, with further investment planned towards acquiring 6 new fire engines and additional equipment.*

13.10 Resolved – That the Committee:

- 1) Notes the consultation feedback and subsequent amendments to the draft IRMP
- 2) Recommends the publication of the 2018-22 IRMP
- 3) Recommends the next steps for the delivery of the IRMP
- 4) Requests that all major changes to services identified in the IRMP are subject to further consultation and scrutiny as appropriate.

#### **14. Fire & Rescue Service: Annual Statement of Assurance 2017/18 & Annual Report May 2017/18**

14.1. The Committee considered a report by Executive Director and Director of Operations and Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to signed minutes).

14.2. Gavin Watts, Director of Operations and Chief Fire Officer introduced the report which outlined the Statement of Assurance as a statutory document that WSFRS was required to produce annually under the FRS National Framework for England, in order to give assurance that the WSFRS was compliant. An annual report was also produced which gave details on how the Service delivered its plans and reported on progress from the last year. Both documents would be scrutinised by the Committee on an annual basis, whilst the Business Planning Group (BPG) would continue to have quarterly performance reports.

14.3 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Requested that the final Statement of Assurance document show 5 years' worth of data for all performance targets and measures as well as total incident numbers being given alongside the percentages. Also requested more detail over the improvements and why previous plans had not worked. Mr Watts advised that 5 years of data could be added along with more of a detailed narrative.
- Requested format changes where possible to include Red / Amber / Green (RAG)'s performance measures and suggested the positive actions and outcomes in the report be more prominently highlighted.
- Requested assurances that the County Council and the FRS were continuing to liaise with water companies in reference to the previous water supply failures in early March this year, so that past errors were not repeated. Mr Watts advised that the WSCC officers currently had a good relationship with the main water companies.

14.4 Resolved – That the Committee agrees the FRS draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2017-18 and draft Annual Report 2017/18, with a request that the proposed additions be included.

## **15. Bus Strategy 2018-2026**

15.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure and Environment and Director of Highways and Transport (copy appended to signed minutes).

15.2 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure advised that the County Council had carried out a detailed public consultation, the output of which helped to inform the strategy, which included feedback from residents, bus companies and input from the Executive Task and Finish Group (TFG). A prospective draft strategy had now been developed which *amongst other things, looked at various options available and sustaining current services.*

15.3 Bill Leath, Transport Bureau Manager, introduced the report which presented the draft West Sussex Bus Strategy covering the period 2018-2026 and set out the County Council's approach to local bus and community transport services, over the next eight years. The eight-week public consultation ran from April to early June 2018 and had nearly 1,300 responses. Previous comments by the Committee had also been taken on board. The Strategy, including planning and design of new developments will be brought back to the committee at its meeting in December.

15.4 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Welcomed the approach already taken by the County Council in developing the Strategy, and requested an emphasis on partnership working. The appetite among bus providers for partnership working was also questioned. Mr Leath advised that the County Council had a long history of working with partners and hoped to continue to do so.
- Questioned how the success or failure of actions would be measured and suggested the use of KPI's to measure actions and outcomes, and highlighted a need to influence changing behaviours for bus patronage. Mr Leath advised that it was in the County Council's interest that buses were reliable and ran on time. A big part of the issue was fare prices, road congestion and infrastructure. These points would be taken back to the TFG for further discussion, along with looking at how changing behaviours in bus usage could be influenced.
- Highlighted the loss of the 3in1 card for young people and questioned how those in education were transported; suggesting the possibility of a West Sussex prepayment card such as an Oyster card, cross ticketing or half priced bus fares for 16 to 18 year olds. Also greater use of buses for local employees subsidised by employers. Mr Leath advised that discussions were on-going with local authorities and bus companies in relation to cross ticketing, but the challenge was competing products due to the deregulated bus market. In the past, funds from employers have contributed towards travel, but all of these points would be taken back to the TFG for further discussion.
- Requested more detailed elaboration on 'Action 6' of the report in relation to developer funding and that the funding was more actively pursued for public transport infrastructure to secure benefits for fare reduction. Also 'Action 12' was welcomed, but with a request to add the wording 'seeks to prioritise those in full time education or apprenticeships'.
- Suggested that the Bus Strategy should be part of the overall Integrated Transport Policy and requested that the possibility of new services was "toned down" where they would be clearly impossible to achieve. It was also requested that the strategy takes account of the impact of any changes to minibus licensing arrangements.

15.5 Mr Baldwin as a member of the Executive TFG did not take part in the debate.

15.6 Resolved – That the Committee notes the draft Bus Strategy 2018-2026 and the consultation results.

## **16. 17/18 Outturn Performance Monitor**

16.1 The Committee considered a report by Executive Director Economy, Infrastructure & Environment and Executive Director Communities & Public Protection (copy appended to signed minutes).

16.2. Tim Stretton, Service Partner Business Partner introduced the report which gave an overview of the 2017/18 outturn performance position in relation to finance (revenue and capital), savings programme, performance, risk and workforce which fall under the remit of Highways and Infrastructure, Environment, Safer, Stronger Communities, and Economy.

16.3 The Committee made comments including those that follow. It:

- Queried what was being done over the 'unknown' young people (NEETs) in paragraph 5.10 of the Performance Framework section of the report and how this compared with last year's and national figures and with other South East authorities.
- Requested further detail in relation to paragraph 1.3.1 of the Safer, Stronger Communities section of the report concerning the additional costs relating to the dual running of the IT system at the Sussex Control Centre.

16.4 Mr Stretton advised that the above information would be provided to the Committee.

16.5 Resolved – That the Committee notes the 2017/18 Outturn Total performance Monitor

## **17. Economic Growth Plan 2018-23 - Update**

17.1. The Committee received a verbal update on the development of a new Economic Growth plan for the period 2018-2023 and beyond to provide the framework for supporting and driving economic growth to achieve the West Sussex Plan's 'Prosperous Place' outcomes.

17.2. Carolyn Carr, Economic Growth Manager gave the update outlining the following key points:

- The decision to adopt the Economic Growth Plan had now been published and progress is being made on the development of the high level Action Plan. This would be brought to the Committee at its meeting in September.

- A Strategic Outline Case has been progressed on plans for the development of the Horsham Business Park (former Novartis site), and work is progressing on an outline planning application to Horsham District Council later in the year. The proposal is for a mixed residential and commercial scheme. Members were invited to attend the Performance and Finance Select Committee on 9 July for the agenda item on the project.

17.3. Resolved – That the Committee notes the Economic Growth Plan 2018-23 update

## **18. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

18.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan dated 1 June 2018 (copy appended to signed minutes).

18.2. The Chairman advised that members of the Committee had been invited to the next meeting of the Performance and Finance Committee on 9 July, in relation to the proposals for the development of the former Novartis site.

18.3. Members also noted that an update on the Highways Maintenance Contract would be heard at the Business Planning Group's next meeting on the 18 June.

18.4. Resolved – That the Forward Plan be noted.

## **19. Date of Next meeting**

The Committee noted that its next scheduled meeting will take place on 21 September 2018 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 2.25 pm

Chairman