

Fire & Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee

30 November 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 Chowdhury, Cllr Duncton and Cllr Patel

Apologies were received from Cllr Bence and Sabrina Cohen-Hatton (Chief Fire Officer)

Absent: Cllr Joy

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

20. Declarations of Interest

20.1 No declarations were made.

21. Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

21.1 Resolved – that the Committee agrees the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 and that they be signed by the Chairman.

22. Responses to Recommendations

22.1 It was clarified that, although the age bracket 15 – 24 is used in collecting statistical data around the diversity of people attending training courses, people have to be 18 to become fire fighters.

22.2 Resolved – that the Committee notes the responses.

23. Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Performance Report Quarter 2

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

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

- Although 25 out of 30 core measures are green, the Service is not complacent; it has increased Safe and Well visits by 25% and soon would be reviewing all its core measure targets. It was important to stay on top of things as another independent inspection was expected
- All fire stations display their local risk management plans and from April 2024 these will be developed together with local communities so that their concerns are recognised and addressed
- The Service was confident that its management of sickness and interventions such as manual handling training would lead to an

improvement in the number of staff not sick next quarter (causes of sickness include stress, anxiety and musculoskeletal injuries)

- Serious incidents, including road traffic accidents and past events, can affect staff's mental health
- The 2% of retained trainee firefighters who have not undertaken their initial breathing apparatus does not affect the crewing of fire engines but is recorded in Core Measure 27 (Staff not in Qualification)
- The move for day crewed stations to a seven day rota from a five day rota has helped with response times being the best since 2017 and assuring communities that there are adequate resources for prevention and protection in those areas.

23.3 Resolved – the Committee: -

- i. Continues to monitor Core Measure 25 (Staff not Sick) to ensure performance in this area improves.
- ii. Asks the Service to consider Core Measure 27 (Staff not in Qualification) and whether the wording needs updating to better reflect how this is reported
- iii. Requests that the additional key line of enquiry relating to value for money in the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee's paper be included in the Fire and Rescue Service's Scrutiny report by Democratic Services

24. End of September 2023 (Quarter 2) Quarterly Performance and Resources Report

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

24.2 Summary of members' comments: -

- It was felt that consideration should be given to including the Fire & Rescue Service in corporate risks relating to the health, safety & wellbeing of its employees and Climate Change Mitigation/Adaptation
- A view was expressed for the Committee to look at the Service's Estates Improvement Programme

24.3 Resolved – that the Committee: -

- i. Asks whether the Fire and Rescue Service should be included in corporate risk CR50 (the Council is responsible for ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and residents/customers) and corporate risks CR73a (Climate Change Mitigation) and CR73b (Climate Change Adaptation) considering its support to the wider risks identified
- ii. includes in its work programme the Fire & Rescue Service's Estate Improvement Programme going forward, including lessons learned from Platinum House, Horsham

25. Council Plan and Draft Budget Proposals 2024/25

- 25.1 The Committee considered a report by Director of Finance and Support Services and Director of Law and Assurance (copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 25.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -
- The Service had wanted to make improvements to four fire stations, but a feasibility study showed that costs had risen meaning improvements could only be taken forward at two fire stations
 - It was hoped that money could be transferred from another part of the Capital Programme to allow improvements on the other two fire stations to take place
- 25.3 Resolved – that the Committee notes the impact that potential financial changes could have on the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and Key Performance Indicators, and that this is monitored going forward.

26. Community Risk Management Plan Update

- 26.1 The Committee considered a report by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (copy appended to the signed minutes).
- 26.2 Summary of responses to members' questions and comments: -
- The Leadership and Cultural Change Programme is mandatory with attendance monitored – non-attendance is discussed during performance conversations
 - Apprenticeships are available in the Fire & Rescue Service
 - Regarding Equality Diversity & Inclusion, amongst other measures the Service runs culture programme coaching sessions by team, has held self-focus groups and is confident that it is travelling in the right direction
- 26.3 Resolved - that the Committee is happy with the Community Risk Management Plan progress from April 2023 to October 2023.

27. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

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

28. Work Programme

- 28.1 The Committee considered its draft Work Programme and agreed to add an item on the Estates Improvement Programme to the 17 June meeting agenda.
- 28.2 Resolved - that the Committee agrees its Work Programme with the addition above.

29. Date of Next Meeting

28.1 The next meeting of the Committee will take place on 1 March 2024 at 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 3.46 pm

Chairman