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| MINUTES |
| **Meeting:** **Essex County Fire and Rescue Performance & Resources Board** |
| **Date:**  29 April 2019 |
| **Time:** 2.00pm to 4.30pm |
| **Location:**  GF01 - Kelvedon Park |
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**Attendees**

Roger Hirst (RH) PFCC - Chair

Jane Gardner (JG) Deputy PFCC

Pippa Brent-Isherwood (PBI) CEO, PFCC’s office

Rick Hylton (RHy) Deputy Chief Fire Officer, ECFRS

Karl Edwards (KE) Director of Corporate Services, ECFRS

Glenn McGuinness (GM) Acting Chief Finance Officer, ECFRS

Darren Horsman (DH) As. Director Communications & Engagement OPFCC

Anthony Maude (AM) Head of Performance & Scrutiny (Fire) – OPFCC

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

RH welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that there were new terms of reference for the meeting and as a consequence the attendance has changed. There were no apologies.

**2 Minutes and Action Log**

2.1 Minutes of last meeting 25 March 2019

There were no amendments to the draft minutes.

2.2 Action Log

2.2.1 Complaints and Grievance Policy – a paper on Whistleblowing, Comments, Compliments and Complaints was on the agenda. With regard to grievance policies this was still being worked on. Action to be kept open.

2.2.2 Training – this remains on the agenda for the Strategic Board in June meeting. It was agreed that a workshop would be arranged with RH, PBI and JG prior to the paper being presented. Action to be kept open.

2.2.3 Preparation for EU Exit remains open.

2.2.4` Clarity had been received on the numbers of children receiving safety messages, and this action can now be closed.

2.2.5 Treasury Management Strategy – a report had been received on the Treasury Management Strategy, which meant that more work was needed to be undertaken on it, with particular regard to short-term investments. It was agreed that short term investments should be kept as tight as possible to minimise risk. The revised Treasury Management Strategy should accompany the Medium Term Financial Plan when presented to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

**3 Forward Plan**

3.1 It was agreed that the Forward Plan should include deep dives on the eight priorities in the Fire and Rescue Plan. It was agreed that RHy, KE, PBI and AM should meet to discuss where these should be in the Forward Plan for the next meeting.

**Action13/19 AM arrange meeting to schedule deep dives on Fire and Rescue Plan priorities.**

**4 HMICFRS Update – Peer Review**

4.1 RHy set out the work that had been undertaken in preparation for Discovery Week, which was currently underway. RH considered that now was the time to separate the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) from the HMICFRS preparations. RHy said that with regard to the CIP it was the intention to pull together all the different strands of the various plans into one to make it a service wide plan. RH said that the Fire and Rescue Plan set the overall strategy; the IRMP would fall out of that; and the CIP would run parallel showing how the service was improving – this would include progress on the Local Business Case, and non-IRMP related improvements. It was important to include the 10 key projects. It was thought that a hierarchy of existing plans would be a useful contribution in pulling all this together.

**Action 14.19 RHy to bring a diagram of the hierarchy of plans to the May P and R meeting**

4.2 In relation to the Strategic Briefing for the HMICFRS main inspection, this was now being pulled together. PBI would be sitting in on the preparation for this. It was suggested that contact be made with Vicki Harrington given her experience regarding inspections, if it had not already be done. It was agreed that the Strategic Briefing itself should make greater reference to the Fire and Rescue Plan and the new governance arrangements.

**5 Monthly Performance Report**

5.1 In introducing the Performance Report RHy said that it was important that the report should be used throughout the service. Incidents were down overall, though there were more secondary fires, which were probably weather related. He went on to note that the lowest level of availability occurred at the highest peak times – this was not unusual in services with a high number of on-call firefighters. RH said that we should be seeking to utilise home workers to try to boost on-call numbers.

5.2 With regard to the causes of primary and secondary fires, it was suggested that a line chart would be helpful in setting these out. In relation more generally to the report it was considered that comparative benchmarking against other fire and rescue services would be useful, for example with regard to average attendance times for the Family Group. It was also considered that there should be greater clarity on the calls made to the Home Safety Information Centre where the pie chart was unclear, and that school visits should be reflected in the figures.

**6 HOBS Project – Closure Report**

6.1RHy introduced the report closing the HOBS project. RH said that to make the report more useful in terms of lessons learned it could be more candid with regard to some of the difficulties faced, and how they could be overcome in the future. There were some significant issues during the project, not least at the end, and these need to be fully reflected. It was agreed that the report could be improved in this respect, and that it would be brought back again for the May meeting.

**Action 15/19 RHy to being back a revised HOBS report to the May P and R.**

**7 Performance and Assurance Framework**

7.1 RHy introduced the report which set out the first steps in producing a performance and assurance framework for the future. RHy set out the main parameters, and said that while there would still be monthly updates, the focus on in-depth reports would be quarterly. RHy said that it was better to get a framework together which could then be part of an annual plan, and which can be tweaked as it developed. RH said that the framework was in the right direction though he did consider that we should now be looking to see how we can assess economic damage. He considered that contact should be made with the Association of British Insurers (ABI), to see if their data on economic damage could be accessed.

**Action 16.19 RHy to make contact with ABI regarding availability of data on economic damage**

7.2 RH said that for road traffic accidents the targets set by the Essex Roads Partnership should be adopted.

7.3 With regard to the proposal to introduce tolerance levels it was agreed that this makes sense and provides a more sophisticated approach. .

7.4 RHy introduced the terms of reference for the Continuous Improvement Board. RH said it was important that compliance with the Fire and Rescue Plan is highlighted as a key purpose of the Board. RHy said that Board sits with the two others – the Change Board and the People Strategy Board.

**8 Dispute Resolution Action Plan**

8.1 Progress on the Dispute Resolution Strategy was noted – however there were a few areas where there remain issues, including the conversion of day crewing stations. It was agreed that the Plan should be reviewed on a quarterly basis at the P and R Board.

**9 Gender Pay Gap**

9.1 The Gender Pay Gap report was noted, and it was agreed that it showed a welcome improvement on previous years. KE said a lot of work is going into gender issues, and is looking forward to the Women’s Forum becoming more established. RH said it would be better to have the report earlier in future. It was agreed that some benchmarking against other services would be useful for future reports. RH said it would be useful to have the mean and median for each quartile to understand better the gender profile.

**10 Budget Review – March 2019**

10.1 GM introduced the paper by saying that there is a request for carrying forward capital budget of £540,000 into next year for vehicles. It was agreed that this was sensible, subject to a decision sheet being completed.

**Action 17/19 GM to provide a decision sheet on carrying forward some of the capital budget**

10.2 GM said that there would be an underspend of around £1.2 million which would be a contribution to the reserves. This arose from a significant underspend in on-call costs, higher than expected income, and lower capital costs. Looking to the future there were some unknowns, including possible increases in pension costs. RH said that there was a big variance between the last report and this, and it would be useful in future to have an earlier indication of likely underspends – these should be being flagged up around November.

**11. Whistleblowing, Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policies**

11.1 RHy introduced the paper and highlighted that there had been a good consultation on it. RH said that he had attended a workshop on the policy and the suggestions made at that had been included. One outstanding issue remained whether to have an independent person outside the organisation to whom people could speak. KE said that this had been a success in the NHS. Discussion centered on whether this should be the external auditor or a charity type body. Overall it was felt that an external charity would be better, but this is something which should be looked further at. It was agreed that the SLT should look at this issue prior to the policy coming back to the Strategic Board in June. This paper should also highlighlight the strategy for ensuring that staff would be made aware of the new policy.

**Action 18/19 RHy to take the issue of an independent person as whistleblowing contact and Comms policy to the SLT prior to bringing the policy back in June to Strategic Board.**

**12 AOB**

12.1 There being no other items, the meeting closed at 4.25pm.