



COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

11 JUNE 2018

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY

REPORT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER SERVICE SUPPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the areas discussed at the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) strategic planning day on 10 May 2018.

Background

2. The Authority holds a strategic planning day twice a year to consider the future strategy, service transformation options, challenges and opportunities facing the Service.
3. At the strategic planning day on 10 May 2018, the Service Leadership Team (SLT) provided a brief to members on the following topics:
 - A national update and the possible impacts for the Authority and Service from:
 - The Fire Reform Programme;
 - Demand and Risk;
 - The impact of high profile incidents;
 - Resilience and terrorism;
 - Changes to the governance of fire and rescue services.
 - The current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP);
 - An update on the Emergency Response (ER) Review and options currently being trialled;
 - The Service's business continuity resilience (BCR) arrangements to satisfy the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England;
 - Organisational culture interventions implemented following the outcomes of the culture survey circulated in October 2016 and details of the recently launched culture survey for 2018;
 - An overview of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the engagement the CFA could expect.

National Update

4. The uncertainty and the potential impacts that the national issues, highlighted in section 3, may have on the Authority and the Service were discussed and debated in detail. In particular, it was noted how the Home Office (HO) had commenced its implementation of the Fire Reform Programme through:
 - The Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the potential impact this will have on governance; collaboration and the inspection of fire and rescue services (FRS) by HMICFRS;

- The new Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and how this will be used to drive reform and the greater emphasis it places on holding both the CFA and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) to account for compliance with it, and;
 - The uncertainties on future funding of the Service and the discussions the CFO had had with the Fire Minister regarding demand and risk.
5. The impact of recent high-profile incidents which the FRS had been involved in nationally, namely Grenfell and the terrorist attack in Manchester clarified expectations both from the public and the government of the FRS.

Medium Term Financial Plan

6. The current MTFP, which was approved in February 2018 along with the level of reserves were discussed in some detail. The current MTFP is based on a four-year funding settlement until 2019/20, after which the level of government funding to be received is unknown. For the purpose of the MTFP, the Service has assumed no further reductions in government funding beyond 2019/20.
7. The current MTFP is based upon a number of assumptions, particularly in relation to pay and inflation. The current MTFP assumes an annual inflation of 2% in 2018/19 and then 1% thereafter and a 2% pay increase in each year. If the assumptions prove to be incorrect, this could have a significant impact on the future MTFP deficit.
8. Whilst the Service was successful in securing £3.8million from the Fire Transformation Fund to build the quad station at Barnard Castle, the Government no longer provides any support to fund capital expenditure. The Authority requires an investment of at least £1million per year to maintain the status quo so will be required to borrow to fund capital expenditure which adds a further £100k to the revenue budget in debt repayment costs each year.
9. The new Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires the Authority to publish the following information in relation to reserves:
- How the level of the general reserve has been set;
 - Justification for holding a general reserve larger than 5% of budget;
 - Whether the funds in each earmarked reserve are legally or contractually committed and if so what amount is committed;
 - A summary of what activities or items will be funded by each earmarked reserve and how they support the FRA's strategy to deliver good quality services to the public.
10. County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority (CDDFRA) currently has the lowest level of reserves of all stand-alone English FRS'.

Emergency Response Review

11. A summary of the ER review conducted in 2017, which identified 8 options for change together with details of the current trials which are being carried out were presented to members. The trials being conducted involve changes to the establishment numbers at Bishop Auckland, Seaham and Newton Aycliffe, these changes were ideas generated by staff following consultation on the 8 options. A change to the staffing model at Spennymoor is also being trialled, this currently involves utilising 'on call' personnel to staff one post on the day crewed appliance.

Business Continuity Resilience

12. Members were presented with the previous and current requirements of the National Framework for England regarding the BCR arrangements the Service is required to have in place in accordance with our duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. In addition, members were briefed on the current arrangements in place by the Service to address those duties.
13. The new Framework published on 8 May 2018 states that '*FRA's must make every endeavour to meet the full range of service delivery risks and national resilience duties and commitments that they face*' which now specifically includes the requirement for FRA to respond to the threat of terrorism and to maintain the robustness of their Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA) capability which went live in County Durham and Darlington on 18 May 2018. The Service is required by the HO to complete a survey confirming its BCR arrangements on an annual basis, however this information has been requested on 3 occasions since December 2017.
14. The importance of meeting the requirements of the Framework was emphasised as primarily it is aimed at ensuring public safety; but also failure to comply would likely result in a 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' judgement from HMICFRS.

Culture Update

15. An update on the interventions that have taken place to improve the culture of the Service since the last staff survey in October 2016 was delivered to members. An explanation of the new survey which was launched on 30 April and focusses on leadership and innovation was also provided. The results of the latest survey will be delivered to a future CFA meeting.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

16. Members were provided with an insight into the HMICFRS inspection process that was introduced through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The inspection methodology, process, judgement criteria and timeline were presented to members, highlighting that CDDFRS is included in the third tranche of inspections which commence in Spring 2019; this affords the Service an opportunity to learn from tranche one and two.
17. Members were informed that although the inspection would not take place until Spring 2019, the Service's involvement with HMICFRS is well underway. The HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead (SLL) Matt Reavill has already visited the Service; he remains in regular contact and several data requests have been made by the Inspectorate which the Service has responded to.
18. HMICFRS have stated that although the inspection will not include an assessment of corporate governance; however, it is expected that members of the inspection team will meet representatives from the CFA. The Inspectorate will focus on the service provided to the public and the content of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and how this translates into operational practice.
19. In preparation for the HMICFRS inspection, the SLT will ensure members receive regular updates on progress and are briefed prior to the Service's inspection in Spring 2019.

Recommendations

20. Members are asked to:

- (a) **Note** the contents of the report.

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