

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

15 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor C Hogarth (Chair)
Councillor A Cherryholme (Vice-Chair)
Councillors: M Elliot, J Ridler, T Smith, K Wyatt, D Hutchinson,
S Ayris, S Alston and C Ransome

CFO C Kirby, DCFO T Carlin, ACFO A Strelczenie and
L Haigh, AM S Dunker and AM M Gillatt (South Yorkshire Fire
& Rescue Service)

N Copley, M Potter, S Ghuman, D Nutall and D Thorpe
(Barnsley MBC)

In attendance remotely: Dr A Billings and M Buttery

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chaplin
and Councillor S Ball

1 **APOLOGIES**

Councillors S Ball and M Chaplin.

2 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CFO Kirby announced that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer had formally announced his intention to retire, with an end date of 8 March 2024. The process of recruiting a new Deputy Chief Fire Officer would begin, with dates to be scheduled for an Appointments Committee, ideally before DCFO Carlin's retirement date.

3 **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

4 **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

None.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA**

None.

6 **REPORTS BY MEMBERS**

None.

7 **RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

None.

- 8 TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC, OR COMMUNICATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE CHAIR OR THE CLERK AND TO PASS SUCH RESOLUTIONS THEREON AS THE STANDING ORDERS PERMIT AND AS MAY BE DEEMED EXPEDIENT

None.

- 9 MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2023

Councillor Ayris referred to the Procurement Service and the minute text that detailed “L Haigh stated that she was happy to provide the Committee with a summary report to show members feedback on the waivers that go through the approval process”, questioning when this summary would be available.

L Haigh advised that this update would be given in a report at the February meeting and included in the procurement report that would be presented at the April meeting of the Authority.

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Authority meeting held on 20 November 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

- 10 UPDATED MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY 2023-24

D Thorpe introduced the report and detailed the recommendations.

RESOLVED – that Members:

- a. Note the updated membership of the Authority for the municipal year 2023-24; and
- b. Appoint Members to Committees and Boards where vacancies exist; and
- c. Make any changes to the membership of Committees and Boards as required.

- 11 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-24

ACFO Strelczenie introduced the report, signposting Members to the summary of key updates detailed within, namely;

- a. A change of the Fire Authority Chair details
- c. An additional reference to the Grenfell and Manchester Arena incidents
- d. Updated graphs and tables
- d. Updated government funding information
- e. Updated money and resources section

Councillor Ayris sought clarity on how the Authority were monitoring service delivery against the CRMP, particularly given the issues raised by external auditors. ACFO Strelczenie gave examples of monitoring mechanisms already in place, such as Scrutiny Board and performance meetings.

Councillor Alston acknowledged the plan was due to expire at the end of 2024 and queried the process for producing the next plan. ACFO Strelczenie advised the process had already begun internally, with data collection underway. Members would be provided with further information at a future Authority meeting and offered the opportunity to scrutinise the 2025-28 plan.

RESOLVED – that Members note the contents and approve the revised CRMP 2021 to 2024 (2024 refresh).

12 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2024-27

S Kelsey introduced the report, reminding Members the first formal strategy was created in 2018, with the years that had followed providing an opportunity to monitor progress in achieving objectives. In formulating a new strategy for 2024-27, the themes of the previous strategy were deemed still relevant and had been retained. The strategic priorities and objectives had however been reviewed.

Councillor Alston highlighted that the measures of success to be monitored were all positive and questioned whether consideration should be given to including negative performance indicators, e.g. number of complaints. Reassurance was given that both positive and negative measures would be observed.

RESOLVED – that Members approve the People Strategy for 2024-2027.

13 SERVICE PLAN 2023/24 UPDATE

ACFO Strelczenie introduced the report, highlighting to Members to the progress report on each of the priorities and actions included as Appendix A. Continued service improvement was a focus for the Authority in coming years.

Councillor Ayris questioned which external provider had been appointed to undertake a fire cover review, with advice given from ACFO Strelczenie that Operational Research in Health (ORH) were fulfilling this role.

RESOLVED – that Members note the progress against the priorities and actions in the Service Plan 2023-24 and provide further scrutiny and support to enable continuous service improvement.

14 CULTURE PROGRAMME UPDATE

S Kelsey introduced the report, acknowledging that since the first independent report was published by London Fire Brigade in November 2022 there had been numerous recommendations for all fire services to consider.

Councillor Alston questioned whether the review of the whistleblowing policy was due or whether there was an issue to prompt this, additionally asking for timescales to be clarified. S Kelsey stated the policy was due for review timewise, however acknowledged that staff in the service were not overly familiar with the policy, the

layout was not accessible, and an extensive review was required regardless of timeline. A report would be brought to a future Authority meeting in February or April 2024.

Councillor Alston additionally questioned the use of independent investigators and whether there was an established pathway as to when that option should be used. S Kelsey responded that this route was not preferential, however there had been an unprecedented rise in casework. As much work as possible was being undertaken internally, but the impact on the People service function and its managers was unsustainable.

Councillor Ayris questioned whether the RAG rating system meant that those areas identified as “Amber” would be progressed at the expense of those identified as “Green” regressing. S Kelsey advised that all areas would be monitored regardless on current rating, with scrutiny undertaken in areas even where there wasn’t a highlighted development need.

Councillor Wyatt requested the social media policy with S Kelsey advising this could be made available to Members.

RESOLVED – that Members accept the progress to date against all the external recommendations relating to culture development and support ongoing actions.

15 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2023

Councillor Smith noted that the issuing of External Audit papers on 12 January 2024 for the meeting of the committee on 15 January 2024 was insufficient notice. Councillor Hogarth agreed that this practice should be improved.

RESOLVED – that the draft minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee be noted.

16 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

CHAIR