



Minutes

Full Authority

Date: 15 December 2023

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present: Cllr D O'Donovan (in the chair), Cllrs Almas, Anderson, Bowden, Downes, Farmer, Garvani, Hall, Hutchison, Keith, Mohammed, Pollard, Renshaw, Shaheen, Tulley and Zaman

In Attendance:

Apologies: Cllrs Fazal, Hawkins, Hussain, Kirton, Sutcliffe and Wood

39 Chair's announcements

A minute silence was held in memory of Nicky Houseman

The chair confirmed the new appliances – the new Scania clean cab appliance and Bronto Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) - would be in the square in front of the town hall for all members to stay after the committee and have a sit in/tour of the vehicles.

40 Admission of the public

There were no items that required exclusion of the press and public.

41 Urgent items

The Director of Corporate Services presented a report requesting members to note the change of date of the next meeting of the Full Authority, which will be held on 29 February 2024.

42 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

43 Minutes of meeting held on 29 September 2023

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 29 September 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

44 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

45 Minutes of Committees held since 29 September 2023 and of other relevant Outside Bodies

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of Committees and other relevant outside bodies as circulated be received.

46 Appointment to Outside Bodies

The Director of Corporate Services presented a report requesting members to approve the appointment of Cllr John Garvani (Labour) as a balancing member of the LGA Fire Commission.

RESOLVED

That Cllr John Garvani (Labour) is appointed as a balancing member of the LGA Fire Commission.

47 Bonfire Night 2023 Review

Members considered a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer detailing the planning and operational response undertaken by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) in collaboration with West Yorkshire Police (WYP) and the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) for the Bonfire period 2023. It was noted that WYFRS actively engaged with local schools, influential community members, faith leaders/groups, youth services, local authorities, and other emergency service partners to promote community education and foster ongoing relationships within and around at-risk areas, building on long standing relationships cultivated through years of collaborative work.

The report included statistics going back to 2018 showing the success of the collaborative work undertaken and a breakdown of incidents over the period by District.

Members thanked the Service for their dedication and successful results.

Members discussed the results for each district and the availability and use of police drones in certain districts due to intelligence received in advance. It was noted that all resources had been successfully deployed appropriately, resulting in fewer incidents and that collaborative working with WYP had worked effectively.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

48 Performance Management Report

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Corporate Services which advised of the Authority's performance against key performance indicators for the period 1 April 2023 – 3 December 2023.

Members requested and were provided with the background and causes of the fire related fatalities.

Members noted that the prevalence of electronic scooters and lithium batteries has increased massively, which is currently one of the most significant challenges facing fire services nationally. It was explained that there are varying qualities of chargers and batteries available to the public but that trading standards are heavily involved in regulating their sale.

It was noted that whilst it is possible to compare the dashboard data of accidental dwelling fires across districts there is no correlation in the figures or significant trends shown. The availability of pumps within the Wakefield District was discussed and it was confirmed that Control monitor this closely and resources across the whole of West Yorkshire are available to be deployed appropriately.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

49 Programme of Change

The Director of Service Support submitted a report updating members of the progress in relation to the Programme of Change 2023-24.

Members requested and were given further information regarding the internal command support software which is not connected to the Emergency Services Network (ESN) which has been delayed at a national level.

Members were informed that planning the programme of change for the new financial year is currently ongoing

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

50 Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2023/24 Update

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which provided members with a progress update on how West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (WYFRS) are continuing to deliver efficiencies and increase productivity against national targets set for the 2021/22 - 2024/25 spending review period.

The report detailed the ongoing annual efficiencies already realised and the planned efficiency options.

Members discussed whether vacancy management is a true efficiency and if the savings are genuine, or if there should be a built in assumption that vacancies take an average of 84 days to fill and savings are inevitable across all businesses. Members further discussed

the trade off between the vacancy saving and not having anyone in post, which can increase the stress levels of the person(s) covering. The contingencies built in to minimise the risk of having a long term vacancy were noted, which include giving encouragement to all staff to provide enhanced notice of retirement or resignation, which is rewarded in the form of a bonus for Firefighters.

Members were reminded that payment of the Government funding settlement is caveated by the requirement to make efficiency savings year on year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

51 Operational Staffing Project Update

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Support which provided members with an update on the current pressures that are impacting wholetime operational staffing within the 224-duty system and the interventions that have been both introduced and considered to overcome them.

Significant analysis undertaken by the Operational Staffing Project has identified that many of the issues have a cumulative impact that cannot be addressed by a single intervention and a collaborative response from multiple directorates is being managed centrally by the Project Team and key stakeholders. The report detailed the current interventions and the options for transitional and long term interventions and their financial impact.

Members commented on and discussed the sickness statistics including:

- The rise of sickness absence since the Covid 19 pandemic
- That absences are at a higher level across all industries since Covid 19 which has become the national societal norm
- The improvement in recording of reasons for absence meaning appropriate short and long term interventions can now be put in place
- The strategies and contingencies in place for sickness cover for both green and grey book staff
- The absence management process and return to work interviews.
- The financial implications of long term sickness absence and the budget contingencies in place.
- Whether absences due to surgery are higher due to delays caused by the Covid 19 pandemic
- The availability of contributions to support private health care and how these are assessed

Members further discussed:

- the payment of a higher flat allowance rather than ad hoc shift enhancements for the Safe to Command Firefighter (STC FF) role.
- The removal of the Operations Resource Pool (ORP)
- Water rescue
- Appliance availability
- Recruitment

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

Chair