



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 16 November 2018 from 10.00 am - 10.33 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Malcolm Wood
Councillor Sybil Fielding

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Charlotte Radford – Treasurer to the Authority.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

13 MINUTES

Subject to including Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, as in attendance, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

14 DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER VACANCY

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee that Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, has given notice to the Service, having secured the position of Chief Fire Officer for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service. The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members questions:

- (a) The structure of the Leadership Team was reviewed and amended in 2013 and then in October 2015 a further review under the current Chief Fire Officer led to the deletion of the Assistant Chief Officer role and a redistribution of functions to the remaining three Principal Officers. A number of changes were also made to the posts at the level below Principal Officer, in that individuals' responsibilities were increased and parity was created across 'Head of Department' roles;
- (b) With current pressures on the Service and additional challenges emerging such as the Government's reform agenda, expectations contained within the Policing and Crime Act 2017 and the inspection regime by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, the Chief Fire Officer has carefully considered the current structure and finds that there is no capacity to further reduce the Leadership Team structure, and that an appointment to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer post is required;
- (c) It is suggested that independent consultants, at a cost of between £15,000 and £20,000 are engaged to ensure that the most appropriate candidates are selected for interview by the Appointments Committee;
- (d) Whilst all senior officers are subject to a six month notice period, as Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service are keen for Wayne to start in post, it has been suggested that his notice period is reduced by six weeks. The savings of the six weeks salary can then contribute to the cost of the recruitment consultants;
- (e) It is anticipated that although timescales are tight, that the recruitment process can be completed in time to ensure that a gap does not appear between post-holders, although the priority will remain to recruit the most appropriate person;
- (f) If the Committee agrees, then it is proposed that the post is advertised immediately. It is noted that if the national trend is followed, there are likely to be very few applications for a post of this calibre;
- (g) Whilst the Service operates staff development and up-skilling, it is likely that internal applications will be very limited. Currently internal applicants are not guaranteed an interview unless they meet the criteria required for the post in question;
- (h) there is no intention to advertise other senior posts alongside the Deputy Chief Fire Officer post;
- (i) there is no specification regarding the gender of applicants, but if national and local trends are reflected, it is unlikely that there will be many, if any, female applicants. However, the suggestion from members of the Committee that the recruitment consultants should reach out to projected characteristic groups as members of those groups may be more willing to apply once they've had contact from the Service, will be considered.

Members of the Committee congratulated Wayne Bowcock on his successful appointment, thanked him for all his hard work during his time with the Service, and wished him well in the future.

RESOLVED

- (1) **to task the Chief Fire Officer to work with the Clerk to the Authority to put in place a recruitment process for the impending Deputy Chief Fire Officer vacancy;**
- (2) **to agree to the request to reduce the notice period to four and a half months and release the current incumbent on 11 March 2019.**

15 HOME SAFETY CHECK CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2017-18

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee of the outcome of a customer satisfaction survey which was independently undertaken in 2017/18, on citizens who had been visited for Home Safety Checks during the period 1 December 2017 and 1 March 2018.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members questions:

- (a) The Service undertakes the survey to ensure that citizens' needs are appropriately met and that the home safety check service is being accessed by all groups within society;
- (b) The independent survey shows that the 426 people interviewed were broadly representative of the groups at which the organisation is aiming the home safety checks. The report provides detailed information on age, disability, and ethnicity;
- (c) 85% of respondents felt safer following the check;
- (d) Nearly 99% of respondents were satisfied with the service they received, whilst 92% stated they were very satisfied;
- (e) 8% fewer respondents had made improvements or changes to their home safety measures following the Service's visit. Whilst this is a reduction, it is impossible to assess if Fire Service safety messages have previously influenced citizens safety awareness, or if by the nature of more modern housing, safety measures are already in place;
- (f) The Service does target citizens of a particularly vulnerable demographic, but in addition, information on the free home safety check service is circulated locally following incidents. Older citizens over the age of 65 are known to be at a higher risk and so this is highlighted for referral through partners.

RESOLVED to note the report.

16 EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the Committee on the progress of the Emergency Services Network, which is to be implemented by the Home Office.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) It is anticipated that during January or February 2019 the revised business case for the Emergency Services Network will be issued;
- (b) access to the Airwave system has been extended for a further three years until 31 December 2022, but with an option for further extensions;
- (c) It has been decided that there will be an incremental approach to establishing the full network and services will receive elements at different times and with differing priorities dependant on the primary needs of each service;
- (d) Once the business case has been issued it will be brought to Policy and Strategy Committee;
- (e) Full confirmation is yet to be received regarding how or if the funding deficits will be met by Central Government, which complicates future budget setting for the Service and so is listed in the risk register.

RESOLVED to note the report.

17 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

18 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.