



PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

21 APRIL 2022 at 10.30 am

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors Eddy, May, Monk, Nutland, Payne (Chair), Wilcox (sub. for Cllr Davies)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Davies.

Noted that Cllr Ali was not in attendance.

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The ACFO explained the emergency evacuation procedures for the room/building.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC ACCESS

None received for this meeting. However, a public access statement had been received from a member of the public at the Fire Authority meeting on 30 March 2022. A response to that statement, prepared by the Director of Corporate Services, was read out to Committee Members. A copy of the statement would be circulated to AFA Members.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

1. The Chair made a statement regarding the continuing need for restrictions due to COVID-19. As no press or public were able to attend in person, the meeting would be recorded and uploaded to the AFA website.
2. The Chair explained the voting system for the meeting i.e., votes against a motion would be recorded first, followed by abstentions, then votes in favour.

Members and Officers introduced themselves.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2022.

It was moved by Cllr Payne and seconded by Cllr May that the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of 26 January 2022 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Performance Manager (CPM) outlining the performance of the organisation against targets for the period April to February for the financial year 2021/22.

The key points summarised in the report were –

1. Fires – all four fire indicators were on target.
2. Alarms – 17 out of the 123 malicious false alarms received had been successfully call challenged meeting the 5% target. Attendance at alarms in commercial premises had reverted to normal after the blip in October. Currently only six incidents were above target.
3. Deaths and injuries – there had been two fatalities due to fire and 36 injuries due to fire and requiring hospital treatment.
4. Call handling –18,894 calls for emergency assistance had been received and 9,402 (49.8%) were attended under emergency conditions.
5. Community Fire Safety activity – completed 3,545 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) compared to the target of 7,242 (49% of the target). The proposed Service Plan for 2022/23 set out a more realistic target of 5,000, it was anticipated that robust processes would be in place to meet the target.
6. People – the goal was to reduce sickness absence by end of 2021/22 to align with the average performance of other fire and rescue services. A realistic target had been set for each of the three years to measure progress against. After 11 months of the current year, the AFA had remained off target with spikes in November and December, though numbers had reduced since. Overall, the main issue remained long term sickness (28 days or more) which accounted for 68.1% of the total.
7. A range of measures and updated communications had been issued to all staff and line managers to ensure sickness is reported and managed appropriately. This included ensuring sick notes were provided promptly for all absences, recorded welfare checks/return to work conversations were held following every absence, appropriate contact arrangements were in place during all periods of long-term sickness absence and increasing the amount of training and coaching provided for line managers to help them fulfil their responsibilities in relation to staff welfare and attendance management.
8. Return to Work Interviews (RTWI) completion in target had dropped to 84%. 549 out of 655 required interviews had been completed within target.

9. There was a change to the metric about completing a RTWI within 15 days for absences of four or more days to a more useful but challenging target of completing a Welfare Check for all absences on the first day of return. For the first year of the metric, it was proposed not to set a target but to monitor internally to allow the FA to gauge progress before setting a published target for 2023/24.
10. Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) were in date for 92% of staff (647/704) and short of 95% target showing amber.
11. A revised format of the Scorecard had been completed for next year to link each metric under the key aims of Safer Communities and a Stronger Service and secondly under the seven key objectives of Prevention, Protection, Response, Resilience, Improve the Service, Invest in Staff, Transformation.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. Appendix 2 of the report should refer to 2022 not 2021.
2. Community Fire Safety target had been reduced to 5,000 (para 5.6) but not clear why as referrals were likely to increase post COVID-19; the CPM agreed to find out and update Members after the meeting.
3. Service Delivery vehicle accidents seemed high, CPM agreed to investigate this and provide a more detailed analysis for the next meeting.
4. Community Fire Safety, more priority should be given to schools and community buildings as more people could be reached, than a visit to one small household. CPM agreed to ask the Community Fire Safety Manager about this and feedback to Members.
5. PDR/Appraisals remained below target and was a concern given AFA's goal of culture change, as these should be non-miss events, as they provide an opportunity for staff to feel valued. CPM confirmed that it was recognised that the Service needed to do better.
6. It was noted that the Scorecard included a measure for 'No. of vehicle incidents (low speed with fixed/stationary) and at fault', but no recording of vehicle incidents involving high speed. It was confirmed that there were no known incidents that had taken place involving high speeds. The CPM agreed to bring further information on vehicle incidents to the next meeting, including type of vehicle involved.
7. Reduction of carbon emissions in FA vehicles was ongoing and it was understood that a recent report on environmental targets had updated the full AFA meeting. The Clerk undertook to confirm this and provide a copy to Members as soon as possible.
8. The carbon reduction target of 20% for 2021/22 had been met.
9. Regarding metrics and changes to the RTW process the CPM confirmed that for the first-year figures would only be reported internally to enable the FA to gauge progress before setting a published target for 2023/24.
10. A Member felt that in addition to reporting performance figures, a link should be made with the findings of the HMICFRS inspection and the transformation process, to show progress with the HMICFRS areas of improvement and progress with the Service achieving excellence. CPM confirmed that the work would try to form a link between the separate areas of work.

The report recommendations were moved by Cllr Payne and seconded by Cllr Eddy.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the Performance Report for April to February 2021/22 be noted and approved.**
- 2. That the Scorecard metrics for 2022/23 be noted and approved.**

8. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Area Manager, Head of Service Transformation Team (HST) which provided a fourth update on the AFA Transformation Programme.

Members were reminded that at its meeting on 10 February 2021, AFA had approved the funding and expenditure for the Transformation Programme until March 2023.

The key points highlighted were:

1. At the end of year two of the Programme, progress had been made by the IT, Policy, Firewatch and Process project teams. This was shown in the dashboard illustration in the report and illustrated the number of work packages identified to date that had been commenced or had been completed.
2. The number of work packages had increased with new work packages being identified by the appointment of a Digital Project Manager. This would allow significant change and improvement to the digital infrastructure and governance.
3. Significant work had taken place regarding the Firewatch upgrade and had resulted in identification of a more significant timeline to achieve potential goals and aspirations.
4. The Workplace Transformation page, Twitter, the FA's Newsletter, and reports to various committees/meetings continued to ensure that messages were shared as widely as possible. Station and workplace visits had continued with all activities receiving positive feedback.
5. A draft audit report had been received, which provided 'reasonable assurance' and this would be shared with the Transformation Programme Board (TPB) when the final version was ready.
6. Budgetary predictions provided to the Treasurer for the Capital Strategy 2022- 2024 indicated that the Programme was on budget notwithstanding the potential future revenue costs for the Service post Transformation Programme.
7. Transformation Programme risks were recorded in the Corporate Risk Register (CRR 19 - Change and Transformation). The current Risk Rating was 12, however when the predicted risk mitigations were in place the Risk Rating was expected to be lower at 9. The Transformation Programme Management Team also carried out regular internal risk reviews of the Transformation Programme which influenced the overall rating of the Programme as reported within the CRR.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. A Member felt that the link between Transformation and Performance should be clearer but noted that the scope of the Transformation Programme was already linked with the HMI report
2. The Programme had a 'Benefit Realisation Strategy' policy which would help ensure that maximum benefits would be realised for AFA.
3. A new role for the Transformation Team had been advertised for a Policy Administration Coordinator which would bring essential support to the policy owners.
4. A Project Plan was being worked on and feedback on its progress would be provided to Members.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

9. ROUND 2 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report of the Service Liaison Officer (SLO) providing an update on HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan. The second 'round 2' HMICFRS inspection report was formally tabled following its publication on 15 December 2021 and presentation was made to AFA on the same date. The covering letter and press release were also included as appendices.

The key points highlighted were –

1. At its meeting of 30 March 2022, the FA had re-confirmed its previous decision (originally taken at its meeting held on 26 March 2019) to delegate authority to the PRSC to approve the final draft of the Round 2 HMICFRS inspection action plan for initial publication and provide Member led scrutiny of progress against the action plan. The FA also requested that the Round 2 action plan be briefed to the full Fire Authority at its Annual General Meeting in June.
2. The four remaining outstanding actions from the Round 1 inspection action plan had been carried forward into the Round 2 action plan (two as standalone actions and two assimilated into new Round 2 actions) to ensure continued corporate focus on all agreed actions.
3. As the Round 2 inspection report did not include any new formal recommendations, the FA was not subject to the formal 56 working day deadline to develop and submit a new action plan to HMICFRS. However, given the benefits of the process developed for monitoring and scrutiny of the HMICFRS inspection action plan during Round 1, the same arrangements would be maintained into Round 2.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. To meet the requirements of the HMI the 22 actions identified would be monitored and scrutinised by Committee Members and senior managers of the FA.

2. The FA also had the option to call upon the LGA to peer review its processes of quality control. In addition, the HMI had provided a list of expectations which the FA was using to benchmark progress.
3. The Cultural Change Plan completion target of April 2022 would need to be amended to allow for more work to be finalised.
4. The strive for excellence was reflected in the FA's Service Plan and this aspiration would be considered in more depth by the People & Culture Committee.
5. Members would be kept informed of progress by regular update reports.
6. A Member development briefing regarding 'Fire Watch' would be arranged to aid Members understanding on this.
7. Special Protection out of hours was not aligned to HMI expectations. Discussions with HMI had taken place and measures had been put in place to strengthen the FA's position on this. HMI was aware of the discrepancy and would give its feedback, but it was considered that the FA had already given a measured response to this.

RESOLVED –

- 1. That the AF&RS Round 2 HMICFRS inspection report (Appendix 2 of the report), the covering letter from HMI Wendy Williams (Appendix 3) and the accompanying HMICFRS press release (Appendix 4) be noted.**
- 2. That the Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan be approved for publication.**
- 3. That following initial approval for publication, further progress reports to be tabled to each subsequent meeting of PRSC for Members' scrutiny with the first iteration of the Round 2 HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan to be briefed to the Fire Authority meeting on 22 June 2022.**

10. 2021/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Head of Finance presented the report which provided a summary of the third quarter update (as of 30 November 2021) on the 2021/22 Capital Programme.

The key points highlighted were –

1. Capital expenditure was £3.7m from April to February 2022, with a forecast expenditure projected at £4.4m and a year-end forecast outturn position of £4.3m underspend (49% of the total approved budget), projected, compared to a £3.455m forecast underspend as of November 2021.
2. Most of the forecast underspend related to the Fleet Capital Budget (Appendix 2).
3. The spend for fire appliances was now expected to be incurred in later years and this would need to be reviewed for the updated 3-year Capital Programme. Ancillary vehicles were showing higher expenditure against the original budget due to the introduction of electric vehicles and £493k of ancillary vehicles that were expected to be purchased in 2022/23 and 2023/24, had now been brought forward into the current year, as approved

by the Service Leadership Board. A number of these vehicles had been delayed and would now be received in early 2022/23.

4. Bath and Weston design costs had been included within the forecast figures for this financial year.
5. The Bedminster design phase and Avonmouth building project were expected to be completed in early 2022/23 and all other premises projects remained on track, including the projects relating to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant (£824k) received in year. A general update for the Bedminster and Avonmouth projects was provided by the Operational Manager within Appendix 3.
6. Recruitment delays had meant that the Transformation capital budget was unlikely to be spent in the current year and expenditure was likely to start being incurred early in 2022/23. This was reflected within the updated 3-year Capital Strategy, which was shared with the FA in March 2022.
7. Operational equipment was expected to be slightly lower than the allocated annual budget of £169k, with year-to-date expenditure totalling £116k and an end of year underspend of approximately £28k.
8. The operational lead advised the ICT capital expenditure had been delayed in line with the delays to the ICT Infrastructure Project and the supply chain issues around IT equipment relating to COVID-19 and the situation in the Ukraine. This would result in an underspend in year and as the allocation for future years had been increased to account for these issues, this amount would not be carried over into 2022/23.
9. The sale of a house owned by the Authority was planned to take place in the 2021/22 financial year, with sale proceeds estimated around £125k. Unfortunately, this sale would not now proceed within the current financial year, as the tenant had indicated they were not able to proceed with the purchase at this time.

Arising from discussion Members were advised that supply related issues for fire appliances would be kept under review and that while Officers would continue to monitor the development of alternative fuel options, there were no plans to change fire appliances to electric vehicles at this time, this only applied to ancillary vehicles.

RESOLVED:

That the latest expenditure position on the 2021/22 Capital Programme be noted.

11. GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY PROGRESS UPDATE

The Committee received a detailed update report on the progress that had been made in respect of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report and recommendations.

In summary members noted that:

1. Progress had been made in relation to the formal recommendations documented in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 1 report.

2. The previous progress report had been presented to the Committee on 26 January 2022.
3. Of the 29 internal actions documented in the updated action plan (Appendix 1), 16 had been completed and 13 remained in progress. This meant that a further 2 internal actions had been completed since the last progress update. These were internal actions 1 and 11. Internal action 1 was the recommendation to train personnel, in the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings. Internal action 11 was the recommendation to develop policies, for handling large numbers of fire survival guidance calls simultaneously.

In response to the report Members were advised that target dates had been revised and were included within the report. It was agreed that these would be added to the spreadsheet going forward.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Cllrs Eddy and Monk left the meeting at this point.

12. BUILDING SAFETY BILL UPDATE

The Committee received a comprehensive and detailed report regarding the Building Safety Bill and the work for Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) that flowed from its introduction. Appendix 1 contained a Glossary of terms and Appendices 2 and 3 included summaries of the Building Safety Bill and the Fire Safety Act 2021, as outlined at the Members Briefing on 11 March 2022.

Following questions from Members the following points were made/clarified –

1. The AFA was quite confident that the 18 metres height limit was the Governments determinant of risk going forward despite some concerns that had been expressed about height not being an effective determinant of risk and that care homes under 18 metres should be included in the new regulations.
2. There were several buildings in the AFA area that would still need to be inspected and that this might add to the existing workload.
3. There was a shortage of fire safety expertise both inside the FRS and in private industry, including but not confined to the shortage of fire engineers. This aspect would be considered further by the People & Culture Committee.
4. A shortage of Fire Safety Officers had been exacerbated by recent retirements and although recruitment had taken place to replace them there was a concern about newly qualified staff lacking the experience needed to be fully effective.
5. The FA would look to re-engage retired staff on a fixed term basis in the short term whilst newly appointed staff gained valuable experience. It was anticipated that this could be funded via the Home Office Protection Uplift Grant.
6. The financial burden falling on FRS's could have a significant impact on AFA although it was not anticipated to be an issue for the 2022/23 financial year. This was being kept under close review and mitigation was being sought by lobbying government for more funding, along with other FA's.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED - That the next meeting of the PR&SC take place on 15 July 2022 at 10.30am.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm

Chair