

## **Environment and Community Scrutiny**

### **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

#### **1. Local flood risk management strategy Annual Improvement Plan**

This is a yearly agenda item where the Committee are updated on the progress of the Local Strategy, where the team are to date and priorities for the forthcoming year. It was noted the main Flood Alleviation Scheme for 2018 had been completed at Priors/Oakley in Cheltenham.

The following topics were discussed:

- GCC's engagement with district councils regarding planning applications;
- how future projects are prioritised;
- how small maintenance that can help alleviate flood risk was monitored; and
- individual property level protection.

Members noted the updated plan and commended the flood risk team for their hard work and support since 2007.

#### **2. HMICFRS Inspection**

As requested by the Committee, members received a presentation from Andy Hermiston on the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. Members were informed on the criteria for inspection, how the service was preparing for the inspection and emerging trends from services that had already been inspected.

A discussion followed around how other services had found the inspection so far, and importantly whether GFRS had the capacity to deal with this inspection effectively. Members were reassured by comments made referring to Gloucestershire as being in a good position, in comparison to other services, going into inspection.

Members thanked Andy for the presentation; the Committee was very impressed with the level of details provided on the preparations.

#### **3. Commissioning Directors Report**

Colin Chick, Strategic Advisor (Communities & Infrastructure), presented his report to update the Committee of recent decisions and policies. Members particularly noted that the following:

- in December Atkins were awarded the professional services contact, to commence 1 April 2019;
- highways are currently looking at how best to deliver the lengthsman scheme under the next financial year as it was funded by a one off provision;
- the LED street lighting programme and Metzway works are due to be complete by the end of this month;
- a new parking management scheme has been implemented at Arle Court to tackle misuse by local long-term parkers; and
- there has been a three/fourfold increase on the price of bus contracts.

Following discussion on the report, the Committee asked for the following actions to be made:

- Simon Excel to write to GWR to lobby that the date of commencement for enhancements to GWR and Cross Country services doesn't slip any further.
- Several members expressed concern, in relation to district planning applications, that GCC were not effectively supporting technical highways comments as officers were sometimes not present. Members requested feedback to the Committee on the criteria for sending a highways officer to district planning committees that GCC have commented on and to highlight if there are any issues with capacity in this area; and
- Officers to feedback to the Committee the criteria for 'bundling' Traffic Regulation Orders. A member highlighted in discussion that they currently had 13 outstanding double yellow line orders in their area.

#### **4. Chief Fire Officer Report**

Andy Hermiston, Acting Chief Fire Officer presented his report to update the Committee of recent decisions and policies. Members particularly noted that the following:

- 56% increase in the number of on-call Firefighters, of which 22% are female Firefighters, far in excess of the national ratio of female staff;
- the implementation of a nationally recognised fitness test for staff;
- the success of the 'Exercise Star' call-out exercise in December. In the case of an emergency over the Christmas, GFRS would have been fully able to respond; and

- tribute was paid to the hard work of the trading standard on prosecutions in the County.

During discussions following the report, members were assured of the following:

- There are criteria in place to make sure no call out lacks an experienced senior manager onsite;
- the service are implementing the new national fitness tests with a 'soft landing' approach to make sure staff feel fully supported throughout; and
- the service will look into the national 'Friends Against Scams' initiative.

The committee reports can be viewed at:

<http://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=673&MId=9087&Ver=4>

Cllr Rob Bird

Chairman