

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 28 January 2020 commencing at 10.00 am at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT

Cllr Phil Awford	Cllr Jeremy Hilton
Cllr Iain Dobie (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Stephen Hirst (Chairman)
Cllr Andrew Gravells	Cllr Shaun Parsons
Cllr Terry Hale	Cllr Steve Robinson

Substitutes:

In Attendance: Margaret Willcox, Director of Adult Social Care
Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health
Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer
Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning
Cllr Tim Harman, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities
Cllr Dave Norman, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Parking and Libraries
Cllr Kathy Williams, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery

Apologies:

11. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies at the meeting.

12. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

14. HMI FIRE INSPECTION - UPDATE REPORT

14.1 Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the HMICFRS fire inspection report and on progress in the areas identified for improvement. The

Committee was reminded that the full inspection of Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) took place in June 2019 and the full report was published on 17 December 2019. Members noted that since the publication of the report, HMICFRS had published the State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England in 2019, which had made several recommendations similar to those highlighted within the GFRS inspection report.

- 14.2 The inspection report for GFRS had identified several areas that were recommended for improvement, in addition to the identification of two causes for concern. The causes for concern related to how GFRS kept the public safe through the regulation of fire safety and how the service promotes its values and culture. Following a re-inspection in November 2019, a letter from Wendy Williams, Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, stated that HMICFRS was encouraged by the progress GFRS was making.
- 14.3 The Committee was informed that GFRS had created a formal action plan to address the recommendations. In particular, GFRS had aligned with the GCC core values, and GCC core value workshops had been held with all stations and teams to gain support and understanding of the new values. Additionally, in order to address the concerns relating to how GFRS kept the public safe through the regulation of fire safety, the risk-based inspection programme had been reviewed, and an additional 3 inspectors had been recruited into the Protection Team. Members understood that it took up to 18 months to fully train the inspectors. Members were also informed that implementation of a new structure was underway following a structural review, and that a closer working relationship between GFRS and GCC was being developed. It was requested that details on the new structure be shared with the Committee.
- 14.4 Members were reminded that whilst improvements had already been made, this was the beginning of a journey of progress. The Committee noted that a re-inspection on progress with the identified causes of concern would likely take place in summer 2020. A full re-inspection would likely take place in summer 2021.
- 14.5 Members discussed the report in detail, including the impact of budget cuts on the performance of GFRS, and the governance of the Service.
- 14.6 In response to a question regarding the results of the GFRS inspection report, the Chief Fire Officer reinforced that it would take time to embed improvements, but highlighted the need to embed them before the full re-inspection in 2021.
- 14.7 One member queried the high number of temporary promotions within the Service, the low rates of individual performance plan (IPP) completions, and the process for identifying staff with leadership potential. In response it was explained that the restructure had reduced the number of temporary positions, and a new policy had been introduced to limit the length of temporary positions. The percentage of IPP completions would be confirmed following the meeting, however it was acknowledged that the process was onerous, and that it was currently being reviewed. It was also explained that talent management was a particular area of

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focus for GFRS and that the progression and promotion policy was currently under review.

- 14.8 It was explained, following a question, that GFRS was working with the Communications Team at GCC on improving its communication with the public, and that they had an annual communications and campaign plan.
- 14.9 One member expressed their concern regarding cross-county working arrangements. The Chief Fire Officer advised that agreements on working with other counties and national resilience arrangements had been reviewed, and that an exercise plan was being developed.
- 14.10 Members also asked questions relating to the backlog of Safe and Well visits, grievance procedures, and the role of local fire stations in tackling loneliness. It was requested that the Chief Fire Officer report back on how this role could be developed further.
- 14.11 Cllr Dave Norman, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Parking and Libraries, expressed his disappointment on reading the inspection report, but highlighted that the restructure, in addition to an increase in funding, was the beginning of the journey to improve the performance of GFRS.
- 14.12 The Chief Fire Officer wished to put on record that despite the concerns identified following the inspection, GFRS staff had continued to serve Gloucestershire communities well. Several members also thanked staff for ensuring confidence in the Service amongst the public.

15. GLOUCESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE CABINET PANEL

- 15.1 Cllr Dave Norman presented the GFRS Review Cabinet Panel report. The Cabinet Panel was established following a recommendation from the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Task Group to ensure oversight of the change programme within the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 15.2 Cllr Norman informed the Committee that during the Panel's recent visit to the Fire Headquarters in January 2020, GFRS staff were optimistic about the progress being made under the new structure.
- 15.3 Attention was drawn to the key observations of the Panel in the report. Cllr Norman thanked the panel members, officers and GFRS staff for their help in the production of the report. The Committee was also made aware of a member event that was being held at Gloucester South Community Fire and Rescue Station and SkillZone on Thursday 27 February 2020 at 11am.
- 15.4 Following a discussion about the timeline for the development of the 2021-2024 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), it was requested that the draft plan be brought to the Committee in the autumn.

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15.5 One member commented on the Council's failure to identify the issues within the GFRS earlier, and stressed the importance of members being more involved in scrutinising governance arrangements.

15.6 The Committee thanked Cllr Norman for his report.

16. DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE REPORT

16.1 Margaret Willcox, Director of Adult Social Care, presented the Director of Adult Social Care Report.

16.2 Members noted that there had been complications with the negotiations for an Enhanced Independence Officer. An update would be provided to the Committee when a decision had been made.

16.3 The Committee was informed of a recent visit to the Carers Hub by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery. The visit had been positive, and they had been particularly impressed by the responses of the triage team and the professionalism of staff.

16.4 In response to a question on the impact of Brexit on care staff from the European Union, it was explained that the situation was being monitored; however the impact in the County would not be fully understood until decisions on arrangements had been made.

16.5 Following a further query relating to the impact in Gloucestershire of the recent receivership of Westminster Homecare, Margaret Willcox determined that she was confident there would not be a problem with spaces in residential care homes. It was noted that the difficulty was in ensuring that individuals were placed in the right place to receive the best care. It was also noted that since last year, cabinet strategy had been increasingly focused on nursing and dementia care at home, rather than residential care.

17. DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

17.1 Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health presented her report. Attention was drawn to the Population Health Management Development Programme, which aimed to support integrated care systems to progress population health management further through analytical input and organisational development support activities.

17.2 The success of the staff influenza vaccination campaign was highlighted to the Committee, with the number of staff receiving the vaccine exceeding the aim to vaccinate at least 1800 employees.

17.3 Attention was drawn to the suicide prevention work carried out following the additional investment of £50,000 agreed at full Council in February 2019. Several members praised the work being carried out on suicide prevention within the County.

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17.4 An update on the ACEs strategy was provided to members. It was highlighted that the strategy and its successes were receiving national and international recognition.

17.5 Members also noted the information included in the report on rural car ownership.

18. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REPORT

18.1 Wayne Bowcock introduced the Chief Fire Officer Report to the Committee. In particular, the support provided by GFRS during the flooding in Sheffield was highlighted, as well as the response to local flooding incidents. One member thanked the crews for their response to the local flooding incidents, and expressed concern that these incidents would get worse in the future.

18.2 Members were informed that GFRS was working to understand what the financial impact would be following the outcome of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) pensions legal dispute, in which the FBU was successful.

18.3 It was also noted that there had been a reduction in the number of whole-time firefighters volunteering to carry out cardiac response following regional discussions with the FBU. The FBU was requesting additional pay for staff responding to cardiac calls. In response to a question, the Chief Fire Officer explained that he verbally encouraged his staff to respond to cardiac calls, and that support was provided for staff who had encountered emotionally challenging situations. One member reminded the Committee of the importance of making the public aware of how to use community defibrillators in a cardiac situation.

18.4 Attention was drawn to changes to lease vehicle tax; the reduction in the backlog of Safe and Well visits; the termination of Operation Yellowhammer, which had eased pressure on the Civil Protection team; and emergency mortuary arrangements. The decisions taken by the Chief Fire Officer for this period were also noted by the Committee.

18.5 There was a discussion about the budgetary pressures facing Trading Standards. One member queried whether funding for Trading Standards should be increased.

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 12.05 pm

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