

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2023 AT 1030 HOURS IN MEETING ROOM 8 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

56. PRESENT

Councillor	Authority
Cllr C Elsbury (Chair)	Caerphilly
Cllr M Hughes	Bridgend
Cllr A Hussey	Caerphilly
Cllr T Watkins	Newport

Apologies:

Cllr A Best	Torfaen
Cllr K Carr	Cardiff
Cllr C Wright	Caerphilly

Observers:

Matthew Brushett	Audit Wales
Martin Gibson	Audit Wales

OFFICERS PRESENT: ACO G Thomas, Monitoring Officer; Mrs S Watkins, Deputy Monitoring Officer; Group Manager Mark Kift (Group Manager - Retained Management)

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

58. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements, however the Chair wished to welcome the Audit Wales Officers to the meeting.

59. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2023 were received and accepted as a true record.

60. STRATEGIC RISK REPORT

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with the Strategic Risk Register report for 2023/24 Quarter 2, and provided a highlight of points of particular interest, direction of travel showing the progress of all risks carried from the previous report and a detailed report of each risk.

Members were informed that Directors, Heads of Service and team leaders are responsible for identifying risks and risk control tasks (which may be new tasks or existing business plan tasks or audit actions that contribute to reducing or mitigating risk) and taking the appropriate actions to manage or mitigate risk within their areas. Only service-wide risks impacting the achievement of a strategic objective or delivery of core business are recorded as strategic risks on the Risk Register.

The Senior Management Team formally reviews the Risk Register on a regular basis and endorses the inclusion on to the Business Management Information System (BMIS) of any new or emerging strategic risks along with associated risk mitigation control tasks.

Each quarter, officers provide an update commentary for each risk along with a Red, Amber or Green status, and review the risk scores based on the current likelihood and impact for each risk. Risk control tasks are also updated at the same time.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer brought Members' attention to an additional strategic risk recently agreed by the Senior Management Team relating to Culture. It will acknowledge the work needed to address the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review and will be owned by the Chief Fire Officer. The risk states that if we do not adequately nurture an inclusive, physiologically safe and discriminatory free culture, then we will not be able to respond to the future challenges and experience negative effects impacting our workforce, stakeholders and communities, including damage to our reputation, poor staff retention, poor wellbeing for staff and loss of trust. This additional risk will be included in the Q3 report.

Cllr Hughes welcomed the report which he felt was very comprehensive and all inclusive, with particular reference to the additional risk relating to Culture.

Some grammatical errors were highlighted which will be addressed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

In response to queries raised, the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Register is reviewed by the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis, updated by risk owners and then updated on BMIS. New and emerging issues are reported to the Senior Management where additional control measures will

be identified and to ensure the risks are travelling in the right direction. The Senior Management Team apply a very strong critical approach to the risks.

The Monitoring Officer provided Members with clarification on the matter of the six-year delay to the replacement Emergency Services Network. He explained that the intention was to replace the system with a more technologically advanced function but unfortunately there is no manufacturer currently able to provide the technology. Whilst existing radio functionality is not compromised and remains fit for purpose, the delay is a national issue and has resulted in existing contracts being maintained on an annual rolling basis at a cost to the government of millions of pounds a month. A watching brief is being maintained.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the risk relating to the proposed Fire Safety Act arose as a result of the Grenfell Fire. The Service worked closely with Welsh Government on the proposed changes to the Act and will maintain a watching brief.

RESOLVED THAT

Members received and noted the content of the report.

61. ASSURANCE METRICS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with an overview of the Service's assurance metrics and the use of these reports in scrutinising the Service's activities. The assurance metrics contain a collection of high-level performance reports and dashboards developed to provide the Senior Management Team and lead officers with key data and measures to monitor ongoing performance and improvement activities. The information is dynamically updated and displayed on BMIS and is used to record, monitor and report across a range of activities linking to data held in Service or local systems, or datasets managed to enable reporting.

A couple of grammatical errors were noted which the Deputy Monitoring Officer will arrange to address and resend to Members.

Members sought clarity on some aspects of the report, and advised that as previously provided, BMIS excerpts of information were particularly useful to enable a broader understanding. The Deputy Monitoring Officer noted this and also agreed to arrange a demonstration of BMIS for Members at a future meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted and accepted the report.

62. RETAINED MANAGEMENT TEAM PRESENTATION

The Group Manager - Retained Management presented to Members an overview of the measures being taken by the Service to attract, recruit and retain members of the On Call Duty System within the Service. Members were given assurances that the Service is constantly monitoring, reviewing and considering new and improved ways of providing a sustainable and flexible On Call Duty System.

Members received the presentation with much interest and requested a progress update report in six months' time.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the presentation and will receive a progress update in six months.

63. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE SERVICE

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided Members with an overview of the policies and procedures within the Service to enable areas of interest to be identified for scrutiny and included on the Forward Work Programme.

The Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference include Policy Development and Review, and Members were provided with a list of Service Policies and Procedures at Appendix 1 for consideration.

Following consideration, Members wished to review further the policies listed under Corporate Policy-06 identified as 'yet to be issued'. In addition, Officers agreed to bring a future report on the management and review process of policies and procedures, to also include an indication of the cycle of review.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the policies and procedures within the Service and identified additional areas of scrutiny to be included in the 2023/24 Forward Work Programme.

64. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer presented Members with the current Forward Work Programme 2023/24 which he confirmed remains flexible to the inclusion of any additional areas identified for scrutiny by Members of the Committee. He advised Members that a progress report on HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services report will be added to the Forward Work Programme

for Members to consider progress made against the recommendations at February's meeting.

The Forward Work Programme will be updated to include the additional items identified at minute 63 above.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the Forward Work Programme and the additional items to be included.

65. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

There were no items of business that the Chair deemed urgent.