

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

24 January 2024

Present:

Councillors Clayton (Chair), Biederman, Coles (vice Kendall) and Trail BEM (Vice-Chair)

Apologies:

Councillors Atkinson and Peart

* **PC/23/11** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* **PC/23/12** **Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24: Quarter 3**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Treasurer) (PC/24/1) detailing performance as at Quarter 3 of 2023-24 against those Key Performance Indicators agreed by the Committee for measuring progress against the following three strategic priorities as approved by the Authority:

- 3(a). Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively;
- 3(b). Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience; and
- 3(c). Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.

In particular, the report provided information on performance against each of the following key measures:

- operational core competence skills (beathing apparatus; incident command; water rescue; safety when working at heights or in confined spaces; maritime; driving; and casualty care);
- health and safety (a general overview of the work undertaken on station audits and the risk from contaminants, accidents [including near misses]; personal injuries; vehicle incidents (together with the correlation to appliance mobilisation) and reporting against the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR));

- sickness and absence (including mental health) for wholetime, on-call, support, Control and casual staff, types of sickness absence, details of the health and wellbeing support offered by the Service. The report also provided comparisons with national fire service data and featured benchmarking for sickness absence against comparable, neighbouring fire and rescue services;
- fitness testing (including support offered for red and amber groups);
- diversity, with a particular emphasis on the work being undertaken on promoting inclusion and developing strong leaders within the organisation;
- strategic workforce planning including details of staff turnover in all categories of the workforce; and
- an overview of the People Services Systems project.

Attention was drawn at the meeting to the following points:

- The performance on operational core competence skills was updated at the meeting as follows:
 - Breathing Apparatus – 99%;
 - Incident command – 98.9%;
 - Maritime – 97.1%;
 - Water Rescue – 96%; and
 - SHACS – 92.9% (amber).

It was noted that 45% of staff were booked in for courses under the new system so good progress was being made.

- Fitness - 1520 staff had been tested to date, meeting the required standard with 27 staff failing to meet the required fitness;
- Accidents - there had been a decrease in the overall trend for accidents during 2023. The quarter 3 accident numbers were up by 9 on the previous quarter and up 5 for the same quarter in 2022-23. Vehicle related safety events remained the greater proportion of safety events though when vehicle related safety events (34) were compared to vehicle mobilisations (8386) over quarter 3, only 0.4% resulted in a vehicle related safety event.
- There were 12 near misses in Quarter 3 of 2023-24, a 14% (2 events) reduction on reporting from the previous quarter. The benefits of near miss reporting continue to be communicated by the Health and Safety Team.
- Personal injuries – these figures remained low with the trend showing a decrease over the 12 month period from quarter 4 of 2022-23 to the end of quarter 3 in 2023-24. Quarter 3 of 2023-24 showed an increase on one event on the previous quarter;

- Vehicle accidents – there were 34 vehicle incidents in quarter 3, the same number as in quarter 2. The Organisational Road Risk Group continued to meet monthly to monitor the position and to increase communication proactively to raise awareness of the areas where vehicle accidents were occurring;
- RIDDOR – there had been 4 reports during quarter 3 of 2023-24. The incidents were all being investigated further.

It was noted that total sickness had increased marginally in the last quarter of 2023-24 (6.9 days/shifts lost in December 2023) primarily relating to long term absence with short term absence decreasing in comparison to this (2.2 days uncertified and 1.6 days certified). Total sickness for the year to date (to December 2023) was 8.04 days. Musculoskeletal injuries were still high but not as high as mental health absence which remained the main causes of absence. It was noted that the Service continued to promote the support available to staff in such circumstances.

The Committee was apprised of the work being undertaken to address capability, disciplinary and grievance cases within the Service. In 2023 (January to December), there had been 18 formal capability cases, 23 disciplinary cases and 19 grievances. The report provided further information in respect of the type of cases and an overview of the outcomes.

The report also set out details of the work being undertaken on diversity and inclusion issues within the Service with an update on strategic workforce planning issues.

The Committee made reference to issues that had been picked up via station visits by Members on training and estates matters. The Director of Service Delivery Support advised that she would pick up these issues outside of this meeting.

* PC/23/13

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Cause of Concern and Areas for Improvement Action Plan Update

The Committee received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (PC/24/2) outlining progress to date against the Action Plans developed to address both the Cause of Concern and Areas for Improvement identified following the most recent Service inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

In terms of the Cause of Concern and 14 Areas for Improvement identified by HMICFRS, 8 had been linked to the People Committee for tracking.

Two of the actions within the Cause of Concern Action Plan were recorded currently as "In Progress - Off Track" which were:

- 01a.07 - Expectations documents (charters);
- 01b.15 – 01 evidence and assurance.

The reasons behind this were as set out in the report circulated. The report also set out the position with regard to the status of other projects which were either “In Progress – On Track” or “Completed”. Of the 23 areas for improvement actions identified for this Committee, 20 actions had been completed with 2 off track and 1 paused.

* **PC/23/14** **People & Culture Update**

The Committee received for information a report of the Chief Fire Officer (PC/24/3 setting out the progress made against the 35 recommendations in His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published report into values and culture in the fire and rescue service. 19 of these recommendations were specific to the fire and rescue service and 15 required action at national level.

Two recommendations (REC26 and REC33) had been closed following review by the HMICFRS Governance Board and the Service’s Executive Board since the previous meeting of the Committee. 3 were “in progress” (as below), two “not started” and one “awaiting closure”.

The three recommendations which remained ‘In Progress’ were:

- REC09– background checks;
- REC32 – diversity in succession planning;
- REC024 – monitor and evaluate feedback; and

This was due to the following factors:

- Recommendations 24 (Monitoring and Evaluating Feedback) and 32 (Diversity in succession planning) remain ‘In Progress’ until further action has been taken.
- People Services are currently considering a process and timelines for ensuring that DSFRS meet the new national requirements for DBS checks. Once this timeline has been established, contact will be made with HMICFRS to outline actions being taken, in line with the national standards, and a revised completion date.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**