

Police and Fire and Rescue Committee
29 March 2018

Present

Donald L. Reid, John Glover, Todd Ferguson, Ellen McMaster and Davina McTiernan.

Also Present

Robert Barr, Timothy Billings, Scott Davidson and Donald Reid.

In Attendance

A. Fraser, Head of Democratic Services, A. Craig, Senior Manager (Legal Services) and D. McCaw, Committee Services Officer (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Area Manager J. Scott and Group Manager K. Hankinson (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

Chair

Councillor Donald L. Reid in the Chair.

Apologies

Angela Stephen.

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair took the opportunity to introduce Area Manager Jim Scott to the additional Members of the Council in attendance who had been invited to hear the presentation on the consultation proposals from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. He advised those Members that they would have an opportunity to address the Committee and ask questions but that any ultimate decision would be taken by Committee Members.

The Chair further thanked the Scottish Fire and Rescue representatives for the informative visit to their facilities which took place on Tuesday 27 March 2018. Members who had been present at the visit advised that the facilities are world class and commented on how the role of a firefighter had changed to a more prevention and protection role.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

3. Your Service - Your Voice: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Transformation Consultation

Submitted report and received a presentation by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) which advised on the consultation proposals for the transformation of the

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. A copy of the full consultation document was set out in Appendix 1 to the report and the consultation period closes on 14 May 2018.

The consultation discusses a number of key areas encompassing the following topics:-

- current and anticipated operational demand;
- current and emerging risks;
- reducing public service demand through preventative activities;
- aligning SFRS resources to match risk and demand;
- national resilience footprint;
- utilising new firefighting technology to support public and firefighter safety;
- strengthening the role of Retained Duty Service colleagues; and
- broadening the firefighter role.

The consultation further sets out a vision for the future through a 4-year transformation programme to support a more effective and efficient operating model and to further enhance skills, capabilities and safety of firefighters to meet future challenges. Additional funding has been allocated to the Service for this year to support the transformation programme. It was emphasised that this was not a programme of cuts but centred on utilising capacity to maximum potential to meet the changing demand, improving the value provided as an emergency service and working in partnership across a number of fronts.

Members asked questions and were provided with information on the following:-

- the maximising of resources within each station in terms of the demand profile;
- that there was no intimation of any closure of facilities at present;
- that buildings coming to the end of their natural life would give an opportunity to realign the footprint of the services within communities;
- the assistance which can be provided to the Ambulance Service around medical emergencies such as Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest;
- the possibility of utilising motor bikes as first mobilisation in connection with unwanted fire alarm signals;
- the potential in rural and Island communities for the extension of the attendance response time;
- the current use of the electronic availability system and the future introduction of a singular technology approach across Scotland;
- the reassurance in terms of no cuts and that the public consultation requires to be open and transparent;
- the realignment of the business model generating financial savings;
- the specialist resources currently situated at Kilwinning Fire Station eg the forestry unit;
- the movement into other areas of demand and partnership working and support;
- the deployment of retained units within the Garnock Valley and the rapid response unit variable model;
- requirements for HGV or LGV licences; and
- any potential for utilising drone technology in the future and issues around this.

The Committee agreed to (a) note the terms of the verbal report; and (b) remit to the Head of Democratic Services/Senior Manager (Legal Services) to respond to the consultation on behalf of North Ayrshire Council, taking into account key points raised in discussion.

4. Urgent Items: Willful Fire Raising

Councillor McTiernan raised the issue of willful fires given the approach of the summer months and requested whether the Fire Service could work with Police Scotland on this matter. Area Manager Scott indicated that a primary focus of the Fire and Rescue Service was about diversionary opportunities for young people.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.