

County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

At a meeting of the **Performance Committee** held at CDDFRS HQ on **Tuesday 31 August 2021** at **1000 hours**.

Present: Cllr B Avery in the Chair
Durham County Council: Cllr R Manchester and Cllr S Quinn
Darlington Borough Council: Cllr G Lee
Officers: K Wanley and A Hobson

Part A

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Marshall and S Helps

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2021 were agreed as true record.

3 Retained Duty System Project Update

RDS Liaison Officer, A Hobson joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the Retained Duty System project which covered:-

- Service Strategic Priorities – Phase One
- Recruitment Volumes
- Retainment
- Availability of crew and appliances
- Phase Two Priorities

Cllr Quinn queried if it is possible for RDS crew members to progress to wholetime. A Hobson noted that in excess of 60 staff have progressed from RDS to wholetime positions within the service or have RDS/WT contracts.

Cllr Lee queried issues with availability of staff within the required 5 minute catchment area. A Hobson noted that the taster days have worked well, encouraging more local people to engage. Work is taking place with local employers which has been mainly positive when it was realised that impact to their business would be minimal.

Cllr Lee queried staff retention levels. A Hobson noted that RDS staff retention is a national issue and our annual leaver rates are around 7% per year which is in line with the national average. The recruitment process has been streamlined and the improved support provided by the RDS liaison officers will help with retention of staff.

Members thanked A Hobson for the update on RDS which they found very informative.

4 Performance Report Quarter One 2021/22

The organisational performance indicators for quarter one of the 2021/22 financial year were presented to the committee by K Wanley.

The Committee discussed the indicators in turn noting where performance was strong or where additional work was required to secure improvement. Overall 67% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 53% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

K Wanley highlighted the following key points from the report:

- When comparing performance to the previous year, many indicators were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions that were in place to manage the spread of the virus. In many cases this resulted in lower than average figures during 2020-21 which makes comparison to current performance unhelpful, therefore some additional narrative has been added to some indicators to provide context over the previous five years.
- PI 03 & 04: Both accidental dwelling fires and associated injuries show good reductions and are performing better than the predicted targets.
- PI 05: There was an increase in secondary fires in April result in Q1 performance being 49.5% above the target. A range of interventions have been taken to tackle the increase in secondary fires including the distribution of Fire Stopper leaflets following deliberate fires, multi-agency walkabouts to identify rubbish for removal and securing empty properties. During Q1, there were 20 online presentations/talks to over 4800 school children across County Durham and Darlington covering topics including arson reduction interventions, consequences of fires, fire investigation and the effects of fire.
- PI 17: Emergency Response crews recommenced delivery of fire safety audits in mid-April, and this has resulted in performance being 16.6% behind target at the end of Q1, work is underway to make up the gap. However, the five year analysis shows an improvement in the identification of premises which present a risk, this has resulted in an increase in both the percentage of unsatisfactory audits and increased enforcement action taken.
- PI 40: Overall there has been a 41.1% increase on shifts lost in comparison with Q1 of last year, the key difference being the change in covid-19 reporting status whereby in 2020 the majority of absence was classed as nonreportable (self-isolation due to others or shielding). A more detail report on sickness absence will be provided to the HR Committee on 16 September 2021 with further detail provided to Members at a future Authority meeting.

Cllr Lee queried if the sickness absence report will include detailed information regarding reasons for staff absence. K Wanley noted that HR Business Partners are working with line managers to ensure the reasons for absence are logged using the categories provided so that this information can be sourced.

K Wanley asked the Committee members if they would like to attach the performance report as an appendix to the Performance Committee paper to the Combined Fire Authority rather than representing the report as a separate paper? Members agreed that the report is to be presented as an appendix to the Performance Committee report.

ACTION: K Wanley to discuss the sickness absence report with Katherine Metcalfe, requesting that additional information regarding reason for staff absences is added to the report.

The committee **noted** the report.

5 Letters of Appreciation

The Committee considered the various letters of appreciation that had been submitted to the Service. In total 14 letters had been received for the quarter one period. K Wanley highlighted the following letters:

- 9/4/2021 - Darlington Crew: Time taken to interact with a toddler and making him smile when dealing with a pigeon rescue
- 9/4/2021 - Peterlee Green Watch: Care shown to a distressed young girl, resulting in a safeguarding referral. The mother of the girl spoken with the crew later on the phone saying that she could tell that they cared, and she appreciated their understanding for her daughter's complex needs.
- 23/4/2021 - Consett Blue Watch: Thanks given from Social Services for the care and consideration shown to an elderly lady found lying on the floor

ACTION: Cllr Avery asked for a letter of thanks to be sent to the crews on behalf of the Performance Committee.

The Committee **noted** the report.

Part B

6 Formal Complaints

Three formal complaints had been received by the Service in the reporting period. No complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Committee **noted** the report.