

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT:

Members

Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

Councillors Astell, Casson, Dennis, Gill, Healing, Nolan and Sutton

Representing Hull City Council:

Councillors Henry, Neal and North

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Lindley, Patrick, Shepherd and Swinburn

Representing North Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Briggs, Grant, Sherwood and Waltham MBE

Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Phil Shillito - Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Matthew Sutcliffe - Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services, Niall McKiniry - Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery, Martyn Ransom - Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer, Jon Henderson - Area Manager Prevention, Protection, Fleet and Estates, Jason Kirby - Area Manager of Emergency Response, Lisa Nicholson - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Alison Finn - Committee Manager.

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

106/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Matthews, Meredith, Petrini, Woods and from Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner).

107/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Councillor Dennis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 113 as he owned a property management company.

108/23 MINUTES - Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 22 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

109/23 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS - there were no questions by Members.

110/23 COMMUNICATIONS - none.

111/23 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2023 - The Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer submitted a report that provided Members with the Management Accounts for the period ending 30 September 2023.

Management Accounts were reported to Members four times a year with the financial position at 30 June, 30 September, 31 December and 28 February.

The summary estimated outturn position for the current financial year based on information to 30 September 2023 was as follows:

CATEGORY	2023/24 OUTTURN PROJECTION
HFA	
Revenue Budget	£0.394m underspend
Capital Programme	£5.069 spend against a £6.719m allocation
Pensions Account	£13.407m deficit

Members were also requested to approve a virement of £361k from interest receivable and interest payable to revenue contribution of capital outlay in order to reduce the Authority's need to borrow.

Resolved - That Members take assurance on the Authority's financial position for the period ending 30 September 2023 and that the virement be approved.

112/23 BI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2023) - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer/ Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report that provided Members with Bi-Annual Performance details.

The Bi-Annual Performance Report, reported on the following area performance metrics between 1 April and 30 September 2023:

- Performance & Risk
- Compliments and Complaints
- Health, Safety and Environment
- Operational Learning
- Occupational Health and Wellbeing
- Absence Management

Members considered the content for each report and took assurance from the Service's approach in performance managing each of the respective areas of work.

Resolved - That the Bi-Annual Performance Report (April – September 2023) be received.

113/23 UPDATE ON BUILDING SAFETY REGULATOR - The Area Manager Prevention and Protection, Fleet and Estate submitted a report that updated Members on the Building Safety Regulator.

The Building Safety Regulator would be an independent regulator with its own powers, strategic plan, and programme of work. It would give expert advice to local regulators such as Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, building owners, the construction and building design industry, and to residents.

The report gave an update on the current position within the Yorkshire and Humber region in relation to the Building Safety Regulator. The regional Building Safety Regulator team would consist of seven Inspecting Officers, one Fire Engineer, one Building Safety Regulator Manager and one remotely based administrative support post. Recruitment was currently underway for the Building Safety Regulator Manager and Fire Engineer post. Humberside Fire and Rescue Service would not employ any of the Building Safety Regulator staff. One Inspecting Officer post would be shared with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service who would be the employer.

Following a recent recruitment exercise, a regional manager and engineer would soon be in place and working to support the recruitment of the remaining team members.

Resolved - That report be received.

114/23 GRENFELL UPDATE - The Area Manager Prevention and Protection, Fleet and Estate submitted a report that updated Members on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations.

On 30 October 2019, The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, published its Phase 1 report. That highlighted a number of issues and provided 46 recommendations for fire and rescue services and other stakeholder groups including building owners and Government.

From those 46 recommendations, 29 were aimed at Fire and Rescue Services. 14 solely aimed at London Fire Brigade, with the remaining 15 directed to fire and rescue services more broadly.

There had been progress on a national level since the publication of the Government's last update. For example, the average rate of completion by Fire and Rescue Services of their action plans to address the Inquiry recommendations, had risen from 81 per cent to 91 per cent.

The completion rate of Humberside Fire and Rescue Services action plan currently stood at 94 per cent, slightly above the national average, with 2 open actions.

Members took assurance that the Service was in a secure position in relation to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Panel Phase 1 recommendations.

Resolved - That report be received.

115/23 SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY – The Area Manager Prevention and Protection, Fleet and Estate submitted a report that updated Members on the Serious Violence Duty.

The Serious Violence Duty was launched in January 2023 and put a statutory duty on the Fire Authority to prevent, reduce and address the root causes of serious violence. The Duty required Fire and Rescue Authorities, and specified authorities to work together to share information, collaborate, and plan to prevent, reduce and address the root causes of serious violence within their local communities. The Duty made up part of statutory Fire and Rescue Service provision. Furthermore, the Duty aligned with existing legislative duties, including the current Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) and the Duty to Collaborate as contained within The Policing and Crime Act (2017). Enhancing policies, training, data sharing and collaboration would empower Fire and Rescue Services to tackle serious violence while delivering core prevention, protection, and emergency response functions.

Humberside Fire and Rescue Service proposed that their Serious Violence Duty strategy had 3 key areas of focus:

- Collaborative Working
- Safer Staff
- Early Interventions

Collaborative working was already well embedded with Service activities with examples such as the Falls Teams, Violence Prevention Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Safer Roads Humber and Hull Area Governance.

The Duty supported, and improved, those existing arrangements for legislating other organisations to work collaboratively and ensure information and data was shared appropriately. The Service had a duty to have a published Serious Violence Strategy in place by January 2024.

Resolved - That the Serious Violence Duty Strategy be approved.

116/23 MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2023/24 - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer/ Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report that updated Members on Modern Slavery.

Humberside Fire Authority had a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and was committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all business dealings and relationships, and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure modern slavery was not taking place anywhere in its own business, or in any of its supply chains.

Although not a statutory requirement for public sector organisations to do so, the Service had produced a statement under Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 which constituted the Authority's Modern Slavery Statement for the financial year ending 31 March 2024.

The Authority's modern slavery and human trafficking statement reflected the commitment to acting ethically, vigilantly and with integrity in all business relationships; and implementing and enforcing systems and controls that sought to ensure slavery and human trafficking was not taking place in any areas of the business or supply chains.

The Authority would not support or deal with any business knowingly involved in slavery or human trafficking in any part of its operations. Any instances of non-compliance would be assessed on a case-by-case basis and remedial action tailored appropriately.

Resolved - That the Modern Slavery Statement 2023/24 be approved.

117/23 REAL WORLD HR NOVEMBER 2023 UPDATE - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report that updated Members on Real World HR.

The report provided an update on the continuing cultural journey the Service was taking in light of the number of reports on the culture within the Fire and Rescue Sector being published over the past six months.

In April, the Service issued a tendering exercise to several suitably skilled suppliers in the market to carry out independent staff engagement. Real World HR was appointed to carry out an independent staff engagement process relating to values and culture, undertaking the engagement process with staff across the Service. Within the contract, it was proposed that the Service would receive a completed report with findings from the Real World HR in November 2023. Real World HR was nearing the completion of its independent engagement process, with the report now being compiled.

Members took assurance by the approach taken by the Service in ensuring the values and culture of the Service were understood and improved, ensuring that a safe and supportive working environment was provided for all.

Resolved - That the update be received.

118/23 OUTCOME OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT AUDIT - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report that updated Members on the outcome of the Staff Development Audit.

The report outlined the outcome of the internal audit assurance review of staff development within the Service conducted by TIAA. The internal audit conducted by TIAA gave an overall assessment of 'substantial assurance', the highest level of assurance during an audit and identified areas of good practice in relation to the introduction of the Portfolio Pathway Process and HR policies supporting the People Strategy and Workforce Plan.

The audit also made a few findings which were detailed in the report.

Key strategic findings included:

- The development of employees within the Service including talent management, succession planning and how the workforce was planned was underpinned by a People Strategy (2023/2024) and the Workforce Plan (2022-2025);
- Testing identified that the Service had put in place an open, fair, and transparent process to identify, develop, and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders, and
- There were practices in place that ensured employees were given the opportunity to develop within the Service.

Members took assurance that the TIAA audit on staff development within the Service had been given 'substantial assurance' and that several areas of good practice had been identified.

Resolved - That update be received.

119/23 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE - The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive provided a verbal update.

- The Chief Fire Officer passed on his thanks to the Members of the Appeals Committee who had supported officers during the recent appeal.
- Positive comments had been received from Local M.P.'s in response to letters from the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Fire Authority regarding the lack of funding for the Service.
- Operation Topaz was underway to manage incidents relating to bonfire night and diversionary activities were in place in conjunction with Humberside Police.
- The latest intake of full-time firefighters would complete their training and pass out in December.
- The Service's annual Recognition Awards which recognise the hard work, commitment and great achievements of staff would take place on 10 November 2023.
- Humberside Fire and Rescue Service would be well represented at Remembrance Sunday events in all four Local Authority areas and crews would be present at all local cenotaphs.
- The HMICFRS thematic inspection on the handling of misconduct would commence on Monday 6 November and conclude on Friday 24 November 2023.
- The recent bad weather had caused some flooding issues that the service had attended and managed in collaboration with the Local Resilience Forum and good feedback had been received.
- There had been an attack on Fire crews in Grimsby recently which had led to one arrest by the Police. The investigation was ongoing.
- The Chief Fire Officer had been advised that the Government's response to the White Paper was due before Christmas following the King's speech.

Resolved - That the update be noted.

120/23 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS/PUBLIC - Resolved - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

In making its decision the Authority confirmed that having regard to all the circumstances it was satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

121/23 BRANSHOLME FIRE STATION CPU ANNEX - PROPOSED SALE - The Area Manager Prevention and Protection, Fleet and Estate provided a report that updated Members on the proposed sale of Bransholme Fire Station CPU Annex.

Resolved - That the sale of Bransholme Fire Station CPU Annex be approved.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Authority made a presentation to Group Manager Simon Rhodes, Head of Corporate Assurance who, after 41 years of service to Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, would be retiring shortly. The Authority thanked Mr Rhodes for his outstanding contribution to the Service over the years and wished him well on his retirement.