

# HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 8 MARCH 2024

## PRESENT:

### Members

#### **Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:**

Councillors Casson, Dennis, Gill, Heslop-Mullens, Meredith, Pickering, Sutton and Whyte

#### **Representing Hull City Council:**

Councillors Matthews, Neal (in the Chair), Petrini and Woods

#### **Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:**

Councillors Lindley, Patrick and Shepherd

#### **Representing North Lincolnshire Council:**

Councillors Grant, Sherwood and Waltham MBE

### Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Niall McKiniry - Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery, Matthew Sutcliffe - Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services, Christine Cooper - Executive Director of People and Development, 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, Steve Duffield - Area Manager of Service Improvement, Lisa Nicholson - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Alison Finn - Committee Manager.

### Also in attendance:

Internal Auditor

David Robinson (TiAA) presented minute 24/24.

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

Members of the Fire Authority held a minute silence to remember Ex-Councillor Steve Swift, a previous member of the Fire Authority who had sadly died. Members welcomed Councillor Whyte to the Fire Authority and thanked Councillor Healing for her hard work.

**18/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Briggs, Henry, North and Swinburn and Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner).

**19/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - All Members of the Strategic Leadership Team declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 27/24 as the report detailed the pay of senior officers (Executive Board and Area Manager level) for 2024/25.

**20/24 MINUTES - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 9 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

**21/24 MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Resolved** - That the minutes of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 February 2024 be received.

**22/24 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS** - there were no questions by Members.

**23/24 COMMUNICATIONS** – none.

**24/24 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25** – David Robinson from TIAA presented the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25.

The Annual Plan set out the assignments that would be carried out in 2024/25, the planned times and the high-level scopes for each of these assignments. Six topics were proposed as part of the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25:

- (1) Management of Statutory Building and Licensing Consultations;
- (2) Application and Management of Disciplinary Procedures;
- (3) Firefighter Development Pathway (FFDP);
- (4) Staff Forums and EDI Steering Group;
- (5) Application and Management of Tactical Plans;
- (6) Training Records

The draft plan was produced through extensive engagement with the Service's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). The Plan also included the following standard subjects:

- Key Financial Controls;
- ICT Management Controls;
- Follow-up (Mid-year)
- Year-End Follow Up;
- Annual Planning;
- Annual Report; and
- Audit Management,

The draft Internal Audit Annual Plan 2024/25 had been received and endorsed for approval to the Fire Authority by the GAS Committee at its meeting of 19 February 2024 (minute 17/24 refers).

**Resolved** - That the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 be approved.

**25/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2024/25** – The Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer submitted a report that set out the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management and Capital and the Treasury Management Policy Statement for adoption for the financial year 2024/25.

The report set out the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management and Capital and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement proposed for adoption for the financial year 2024/25. The Authority's Constitution required that the Policy Statement was approved by the full Fire Authority and the responsibility could be delegated.

The report also outlined the recommended policy to be adopted in respect of creating the Minimum Revenue Provision for 2024/25, in line with the statutory requirements set out in The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and 2017.

The suggested strategy for 2024/25 in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function was based upon the S.151 Officer's views on interest rates, supplemented with leading mark forecasts provided by the Authority's treasury management advisors and support from the treasury management team within Hull City Council. The strategy covered:

- limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Authority;
- the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators;
- the current treasury position;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing requirement strategy;
- policy on borrowing in advance of need;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy;
- creditworthiness policy;

- the MRP strategy;
- policy on use of external service providers

The approach outlined within the report was aimed at achieving effective and efficient management of the Authority's financial resources and reflected a prudent approach to the management of financial risk for the Authority.

The Authority forecast to have an under-borrowed position in relation to long-term borrowing of £1.997m at the end of 2023/24 which would save in the region of £100k in interest in each year until the borrowing was taken.

**Resolved** - That the 2024/25 Treasury Management Statement be approved.

**26/24 PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25** - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report that provided information regarding the reporting of Service level performance for the period 2024/25, monitored and retrospectively reported to Members on a bi-annual basis.

Bi-annual performance reporting provided Members and the public with more meaningful performance information. That was achieved as the longer reporting period enabled more robust trend analysis to be completed, combined with the opportunity to evaluate the impact of Service intervention activities.

The established frequency of bi-annual performance reporting would continue for 2024/25, as detailed in the business planning framework and outlined below:

- (i) April to September performance would be reported to Members in November 2024.
- (ii) The annual performance report, reflective of cumulative performance over the full 12-month period, would be issued to Members in June 2025.

Bi-annual performance reporting would be supplemented by exception reporting of relevant trends / incidents or events to Members at Authority meetings and / or Member Days.

Performance reports would be reflective of the following principle Service activities:

- Key Incident Information
- Protection
- Prevention
- Response
- Environmental
- People
- Public Feedback
- Corporate Responsibilities
- Health & Safety

Specific Service Performance Indicators that would be reported against included:

- SPI High Severity Fires
- SPI 2.2 Total Deliberate Fires
- SPI 2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fires
- SPI 2.4 Deliberate Secondary Fires
- SPI 2.5 Automatic Fire Alarms (Non-Domestic)

**Resolved** - That Members endorse the approach for the reporting of Service performance for the period 2024/25.

**27/24 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25** - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report that proposed a Pay Policy Statement for Humberside Fire Authority for 2024/25, as required by the Localism Act 2011, for approval by the Fire Authority.

The Act introduced senior staff pay transparency into local authorities with a requirement that authorities prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. A statement for Humberside Fire Authority was first produced for 2012/13 and approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 17 April 2012 (Minute 3839 refers).

The Authority agreed at that time that the Pay Policy Statement should be reviewed annually by officers and that any proposed amendments would be brought before the full Fire Authority for consideration.

The proposed statement for 2024/25 reflected the pay details for the current Strategic Leadership Team posts. A draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 had been produced in compliance with the legislative requirements and having regard to the DCLG guidance. The proposed Statement complied with the legislative requirements and reflected the structure of the Strategic Leadership Team as agreed by the Humberside Fire Authority on 12 March 2021.

**Resolved** - That the Fire Authority:

- (i) Approves the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25;
- (ii) Authorises the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive to make factual adjustments to the Policy during the course of 2024/25, for example, in reflection of the impact of any pay awards arising for different employment groups during the year;
- (iii) Be presented for consideration any other proposed amendments to the Policy during 2024/25;
- (iv) Approves a review of senior officer (Executive Board and Area Managers) pay to be carried out during the financial year 2024/25.

**28/24 GENDER, ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY PAY GAP** – The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report on the Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap.

The report detailed the pay gap reporting information and supportive narrative for the Service to meet its legislative obligations for the 2023/2024 gender pay gap reporting requirements. The report used data as of 31 March 2023. The Service had a legal duty to report gender pay gap by 30 March 2024 by publishing the report, along with an easy read version and submitting data sets to Government Gender Pay Gap Portal by the same date. The Service continued to report not just on gender but voluntarily on both ethnicity and disability pay gaps in the report.

The report showed that the Service's mean gender pay gap continued to decrease, but not as quickly as in the preceding 6 reporting years. That was primarily due to the recruitment of an additional 53 men during the year, primarily into fire contingency roles.

The ethnicity pay gap was slightly smaller than the gender pay gap, and while the mean ethnicity pay gap had increased slightly, the median ethnicity pay gap had reduced this year. However, the Service had had a slight reduction in ethnic minority staff. That showed the need to continue to find effective ways of recruiting, retaining and promoting ethnic minority staff.

The report showed that the disability pay gap continued to be negative which was promising, but there was a continuing need to build trust to ensure disabled staff felt comfortable to disclose disabilities.

**Resolved** - That the Fire Authority approves:

- (i) The submission of the data sets to the Government Gender Pay Gap Portal, and
- (ii) The publication of an easy read version of the report.

**29/24 SUGGESTED SCRUTINY TOPICS FOR 2024/25 FOR HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY CONSIDERATION** - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report with a list of scrutiny topics, proposed by the Strategic Leadership Team for the Fire Authority to consider and shortlist for the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee's Scrutiny programme 2024/25.

The GAS Committee was set an annual scrutiny work programme, looking at a variety of aspects of the Service work and policy implementation from the point of view of the communities it served, to provide

constructive feedback and recommendations to improve the Service. The GAS Committee would programme six scrutiny items for completion during 2024/25.

The Authority was requested to consider the proposed topics of scrutiny put forward (as set out at Appendix 1 of the report) and shortlist six for the GAS Committee's Scrutiny Programme 2024/25.

**Resolved** - That the Authority approves the list of scrutiny topics put forward (as set out at Appendix 1 of the report) and that the GAS Committee shortlist to six scrutiny items for its 2024/25 Scrutiny Programme.

**30/24 VALUES AND CULTURE IN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES** - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report that updated Members on the Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services.

In March 2023 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published their report 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services'. The report was an outcome of a spotlight review of inspection findings across all 44 English Fire and Rescue Services.

The report made 35 recommendations across 9 themes. Chief Fire Officers have accountability for 19 of the recommendations, with the Home Office and the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) having accountability for the other recommendations.

An action plan with an integrated GAP analysis, was used to manage and record the Service's progression against each of the recommendations, with information and evidence coordinated through a cross-departmental culture group.

The Service welcomed the spotlight report into values and culture within Fire and Rescue Services and actively engaged in a self-assessment of the organisation, against the recommended actions.

The Service was committed to ensure the values and culture of the organisation remained as something they, and their communities were all proud of, and that they provided a safe and supportive working environment for all colleagues and visitors.

**Resolved** - That the Fire Authority:

- (i) takes assurance from the pro-active actions taken and will continue to be in receipt of further updates on at least a quarterly basis.
- (ii) takes assurance that the three recommendations stated as partial compliance are either being progressed to their conclusion and / or are awaiting national guidance to complete.
- (iii) takes assurance that the Service comprehensively manages each of the applicable recommendations, providing proportional and accurate evidence to ensure compliance, subject to validation through GAS Committee in April 2024 as its chosen scrutiny topic.

**31/24 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery provided a verbal update.

- The Service sent its condolences to the family of Steve Swift, a former member of the Authority, who had sadly passed away.
- International women's day had been celebrated by the Service with a full day of events that were attended equally by men and women.
- The last weekend had seen an increase of over fifty percent in attendances at emergencies by the Service, with over 200 incidents attended. The Deputy Chief Fire officer acknowledged the contribution of all staff, including the Control Centre, who responded to all these incidents.
- Fire Crews had responded to an incident last week in Barnoldby le Beck which had sadly resulted in a fatality. A serious incident review was underway. Welfare support was in place for the staff who responded to the incident.
- A number of large-scale procurement exercises were currently underway:
  - Cyber support
  - Control 25 Programme - final tenders had been received for the replacement Control Room system.

- Breathing apparatus sets
- The Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) would be attending the LGA Annual Fire Conference in March 2024, with the ACFO presenting to the Conference on behalf of HFRS as the lead for the Fire and Rescue Sector on productivity.
- The annual National pay negotiations were shortly due to commence for grey book (operational) staff.
- In its Fire Reform White Paper Consultation Outcome the Government had determined that Chief Fire Officers should be afforded operational independence. The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer would be taking part in a national consultation exercise on this on 20 March 2024.
- A draft timetable for the Service's next inspection (Round 3) by HMICFRS had now be shared, commencing in late July with onsite inspection taking place throughout September 2024. The Service Liaison Lead continued to visit the Service (and would continue to do so on the run up to the inspection) to build a true picture of the Service prior to inspection.
- The Service hosted several National Resilience Capability assets which were to be made available for national deployment to support large incidents in other Fire and Rescue Services across the country. The capabilities were subject to annual National Resilience Audit and Assurance programme. The Service had performed well in it recent four audits.
- The Service was reviewing its annual productivity and efficiency plan in advance of submission to the Home Office by the end of March. It was a requirement for all Fire and Rescue Authorities to produce an annual plan that set out its proposed 3 per cent efficiency and 2 per cent productivity savings.

**Resolved** - That the update be noted.

**32/24 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.

**33/24 HOWDEN FIRE STATION** - The Area Manager of Prevention, Protection, Fleet and Estates submitted a report on proposals for Howden Fire Station.

**Resolved** – That the Fire Authority:

(i) Endorses the Executive Board's decision to progress Option 3 (the demolition and rebuild on of Howden Fire Station on the existing site), and

(ii) takes assurance that the Service continues to invest in its people, buildings and infrastructure to ensure continuous improvement.