

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 26 APRIL 2024

PRESENT:

Members

Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

Councillors Casson, Dennis, Meredith, Sutton and Whyte

Representing Hull City Council:

Councillors Henry, Neal, Petrini and Woods

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Lindley, Patrick, Shepherd and Swinburn

Representing North Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Grant, Sherwood and Waltham MBE

Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Phil Shillito - Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, 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 (presented Minute 39/24).

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

Members of the Fire Authority held a minute silence to remember Councillor Briggs, Chairman of the Fire Authority, who had sadly died. Members thanked Councillor Woods for his time on the Fire Authority as he was standing down at the next local elections in May 2024.

34/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence were submitted from Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Councillors Gill, Heslop-Mullens, Matthews, North and Pickering.

35/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - There were no declarations of interest.

36/24 MINUTES - Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 8 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

37/24 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS - there were no questions by Members.

38/24 COMMUNICATIONS -

- The Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25 had been sent to the Home Office and published on the website.
- The Service was continuing to receive updates on the progressing of Minimum Service Levels, an update of which would be brought to Members at a future meeting or Member Day.

- The Annual Statement of Assurance for 2022/23 and 2023/24 had been submitted to the Home Office following a new request that all Fire and Rescue Services submit the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Statements by 17th May.
- The National Employers for Fire and Rescue Services had made a pay offer of 4 per cent to the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Having assessed the offer, the FBU Executive Council had unanimously agreed to recommend that members should vote to accept the offer.

39/24 INTERNAL AUDIT: DIRECTOR OF AUDIT OPINION AND ANNUAL REPORT (2023/24) – David Robinson presented the 2023/24 Annual Report by TIAA on the internal control environment at Humberside Fire and Rescue Service.

The 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan approved by the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee was for 65 days of internal audit coverage in the year. There was one extra audit carried out which was in addition to the work set out in the Annual Audit Plan. That was for a review of Procurement and was requested by the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

TIAA carried out nine reviews, which were designed to ascertain the extent to which the internal controls in the system were adequate to ensure that activities and procedures were operating to achieve Humberside Fire and Rescue Service’s objectives. For each assurance review an assessment of the combined effectiveness of the controls in mitigating the key controls was provided.

TIAA was satisfied that, for the areas reviewed during the year, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service had reasonable and effective risk management, control and governance processes in place.

That opinion was based solely on the matters that came to the attention of TIAA during the course of the internal audit reviews carried out during the year and was not an opinion on all elements of the risk management, control and governance processes or the ongoing financial viability or their ability to meet financial obligations which must be obtained by Humberside Fire and Rescue Service from its various sources of assurance.

Resolved - That the Audit Opinion and Annual Report 2023/24 be received.

40/24 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2023/24 PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2024 - The Executive Director of Finance/S.151 Officer submitted a report summarising the Management Accounts 2023/24 for the period ending 29 February 2024.

The summary estimated outturn position for the current financial year based on information to 29 February 2024 was as follows:

CATEGORY	2023/24 OUTTURN PROJECTION
HFA	
Revenue Budget	£0.296m underspend
Capital Programme	£2.089 spend against a £6.719m allocation
Pensions Account	£14.366m deficit

That was the final set of Management Accounts for the 2023/24 financial year and work was now well underway to compile the published Annual Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.

Further details on all of those areas were available electronically alongside the agenda papers on the Fire Authority’s website at www.humbersidefire.gov.uk/fire-authority.

Resolved - That the Management Accounts for the period ending 29 February 2024 be received.

41/24 USE OF DELEGATED POWERS BY THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER 2023/24 – The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive submitted a report on the use of delegated powers by the Chief Fire Officer which was presented by The Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery.

The report provided the Authority with details of the decisions taken by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive during 2023/24 to vary the establishment, under his delegated powers within the Fire Authority's Constitution. Members were asked to note that the report concerned only permanent changes to the establishment. Temporary posts, re-gradings and changes in job content where the post remained substantially the same were not included as such decisions were within the remit of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive under the Constitution.

In the year 2023/24 the following substantive establishment changes had been approved under the delegated authority given to the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive:

- (i) Increase the establishment of the Finance team from 11.28 FTE to 14.28 FTE through the creation of the following posts:
 - 1 x Grade 6 Finance Assistant
 - 1 x Grade 8 Procurement Officer
 - 1 x Grade 10 Senior Finance Officer
- (ii) The creation of one full time Grade 10 Service Improvement Supervisor post within Corporate Assurance.
- (iii) The creation of one full time Grade 6 Administrative Assistant within HR.

Resolved - That the report be received.

42/24 PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY PLAN 2024/25 - The Executive Director of Finance and S.151 Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report on the Efficiency and Productivity Plan for 2024/25.

The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire required all Fire and Rescue Authorities to produce an Efficiency and Productivity Plan for the period 2024/25, aligned to Home Office guidance regarding content. In simple terms, the Plan explained how Humberside Fire Authority aimed to deliver efficiencies and increased productivity, against national targets, set for 2021/22 – 2024/25 Spending Review period.

The draft HFA Productivity and Efficiency Plan 2024/25 provided detail of the efficiency and productivity progress of HFA against the national goals and with due consideration of efficiencies being made, alongside the rise of 2.99 per cent in Precept. The Plan was published on the Authority's website and the Authority committed to publishing an annual report on the progress of the Efficiency and Productivity Plan on its website, alongside the Annual Statement of Assurance, in July of each year.

The Authority had achieved non-pay efficiency savings of 3.19 per cent during 2023/24 which was more than the target of 2.42 per cent that was published in the Productivity and Efficiency Plan for 2023/24. The operational and non-operational workforce was managed through workforce planning arrangements. That identified existing and future vacancies and considered the role requirements and recruitment needs against current priorities, to utilise vacancies more effectively in deciding whether the role be immediately filled or considered for reallocation and re-evaluation into other parts of the Service in line with Service needs.

The Service had recorded cashable, non-cashable and cost avoidance savings of £569k through the efficient and effective implementation of good procurement practices since April 2022 and would continue to use the most appropriate procurement route to meet the needs of the Authority. The Authority was committed to pursuing a 3 per cent increase in productivity in line with national targets, set for the 2021/22 - 2024/25 Spending Review period.

Resolved - That the Efficiency and Productivity Plan for the period 2024/25, as submitted to the Home Office, be approved.

43/24 CULTURE UPDATE - HMICFRS MISCONDUCT QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a verbal update on the HMICFRS Misconduct Questionnaire.

In 2023, Crest Advisory, on behalf of HMICFRS, conducted a comprehensive online survey among fire and rescue service staff, aiming to gauge their experiences and perceptions regarding misconduct within

the sector. The survey was open from 1 November to 15 December 2023 and received 82 completed responses from HFRS, representing 8% of the workforce.

- 60 per cent of respondents reported experiencing and/or witnessing misconduct in the previous 12 months.
- Half (49.6 per cent) believed misconduct-related behaviours or attitudes had improved over time.
- 31 per cent believed they had remained the same, while 19% perceived a worsening trend.
- Approximately 80 per cent found training on bullying/harassment and discrimination useful, with around 65 per cent finding cultural awareness and unconscious bias training beneficial.
- 93 per cent of respondents were confident in reporting misconduct and understanding social media use expectations.
- From a line manager's perspective, 63 per cent felt supported in flagging issues, while 89 per cent feel empowered to promote good behaviour standards. 88 per cent believed they, as line managers, set the team culture and 73 per cent felt they could address misconduct-related behaviours without losing support.

Currently Corporate Assurance was working through the actions identified in the RealWorldHR staff engagement survey report and mapping these, alongside other people and culture related publications (such as HMICFRS Values & Culture spotlight report and now the Crest Advisory report), into one overarching action plan, providing a gap analysis that would ensure no areas were missed or not actioned. Ultimately that would then form part of the Service Improvement Plan and the Culture Working Group would be tasked with realising the actions and outcomes identified from this mapping exercise. At the same time, through a People centred approach communication plan, staff would be kept abreast of progress, engaged with and utilised as part of the solution.

The Chief Fire Officer had recently written to all staff to inform them of the Crest Advisory findings and to assure them that the Service remained committed to acting whenever an issue was raised and to upholding the Core Code of Ethics, evidenced by the firm approach taken during 2023/24 in taking necessary disciplinary action against individuals.

It was recognised, however, that this was not a quick fix and would take quite a period of time and require a sustained effort to realise cultural change.

Resolved - That the update be received.

44/24 HMICFRS UPDATE - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a verbal update on HMICFRS.

- i. HMICFRS would be undertaking its Round 3 inspection of the Service from 30 July until end of September this year.
- ii. The Service Liaison Lead attended the Service this week and the Service had now received the template timetable from the inspectorate, focussed on all elements of Service activity.
- iii. A document return of 53 documents (including Service policies and plans) was required to be submitted to the inspectorate in July.
- iv. In addition, the Service also had to submit a Self-Assessment against HMICFRS template questions (2000-word limit).
- v. HMICFRS had now introduced an additional rating of 'Adequate' and would no longer make gradings against the three pillars of Effectiveness, Efficient and People, but rather grade against 11 individual areas.

Resolved - That the update be received.

45/24 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE - The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided a verbal update.

- i. The Passing Out Parade of 10 April was the first of its kind that celebrated the combination of Full-time recruits, On-call recruits, Control Room operators and non-operational staff joining the service recently.
- ii. The Community Interview Panel had been created to aid the recruitment process and was currently out to advert for volunteers to join the panel. The Service had recently introduced

FlashApp, an App developed and rolled out across the Service to provide dynamic operational information. All staff involved in were thanked for their contribution in developing the App.

- iii. A request had been received from Government to all Fire and Rescue Services to provide a further update on their implementation against the Grenfell Tower recommendations. The Service had implemented all the recommendations previously.

Resolved - That the update be noted.