

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 19 July 2024

PRESENT:

Members

Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

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

Representing Hull City Council:

Councillors Bridges and North

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Bonner, and Patrick

Representing North Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Grant, Sherwood (Chairp) 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, Emma Appleton – Deputy Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Alison Finn - Committee Manager.

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

61/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence were submitted from Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Councillors Beeson, Henry, Lindley, McMurray, Neal, Ogg, Pickering and Shepherd.

62/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - There were no declarations of interest.

63/24 MINUTES - Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 7 June 2024 be approved as a correct record.

64/24 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS - there were no questions by Members.

65/24 COMMUNICATIONS - The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that

- A Business Interruption Team Management meeting had been held earlier this morning in response to the international Microsoft outage incident which had affected some server-based systems. Members were assured that the incident had not affected the Service's response to emergency calls or mobilisation. Further strategic and tactical meetings would be held later in the day.
- The Chair and the Chief Fire Officer had responded to a recent NJC consultation.
- The Chief Fire Officer had sent letters to all the newly elected or re-elected MPs that represented the Humberside area to seek support for a three-year financial settlement for Fire Services and to back the reintroduction of the grant.
- The Service had received its annual letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and had a nil return rate for complaints.

66/24 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS - The Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer submitted the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.

The report presented the Authority's full unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 and also highlighted the key aspects of revenue and capital outturn for the year.

The Accounts were subject to audit by Mazars in their role as the Authority's external auditor. The draft unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was signed and published on the Authority's website on 31 May 2024.

- Resolved** - (a) That Members take assurance from the Accounts presented; and
- (b) that the Capital Programme Rephasing, as set out at paragraph 4.5 of the report, be approved.

67/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 - The Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer submitted a report that provided Members with a review of the Authority's treasury management activity and Prudential Indicators for the year 2023/24.

The Authority's temporary investments totalled £10.1m as at 31 March 2024.

Table 1 – Investment income earned 2023/24

Interest Earned 2023/24	Rate of return 2023/24	Benchmark return 2023/24*	Difference
£810,978	5.00%	4.97%	0.03%

* Benchmark set as average SONIA rate for the year

Interest earned during 2023/24 was £611k higher than originally budgeted for in respect of investment activity for the year, due to higher interest rates than originally anticipated.

The Authority seeks to minimise the use of short-term borrowing to fund temporary cash shortfalls. The Authority did not undertake any short-term borrowing during the course of the year. Long-term loans are taken out either to replace existing loans which have matured or to fund capital expenditure. Under the Prudential Regime there are no longer centrally imposed limits on borrowing, but individual Authorities are required to determine themselves what is a sustainable and affordable level of borrowing as an integral part of their Medium-Term Financial Planning processes.

The Authority's average level of borrowing was £17.5m for 2023/24, on which £546k of interest was payable. The Authority repaid £1.5m of PWLB debt upon maturity whilst taking no new borrowings during the year. Closing PWLB debt at 31 March 2024 was £16.7m.

The S.151 Officer considered the current capital programme to be affordable and sustainable with the revenue effects of capital investment built into the Medium-Term Resource Strategy. Through the Medium-Term Financial Planning Process, the Authority had aligned its resources to key strategic priorities. Based on the Operational Boundary definition, external debt at 31 March 2024 was £17.3m below the agreed Operational Boundary for 2023/24 and the maturity structure for both borrowing and investments remain within the approved upper and lower limits. Subsequent borrowing or re-scheduling during 2024/25 would take into account prevailing interest rates on offer from the Public Works Loans Board, the current maturity structure of loans, balanced with the need to reduce capital risk by keeping down cash-balances.

Members took assurance from the treasury management activities undertaken during 2023/24 and the Prudential Indicators as outlined in the report.

Resolved - That the Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24 be approved.

68/24 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24 - The Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report summarising the annual performance of the Service for 2023/24. The 2023/24 Annual Performance Report included key data and information relating to prevention, protection, response, health, safety, environment and people activities, all of which were aligned to the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and supported the delivery of the Strategic Plan (SP).

During the 2023/24 period, the Service had exceeded its targets for responding to Dwelling Fires and Road Traffic Collisions. First engines arrived within the specified time frame in over 97 per cent of incidents (depending on the level of risk), which was well above the minimum standard of 90 per cent. There was a 5 per cent decrease in the total number of emergency incidents attended, responding to 13,694 incidents during 2023/24 compared to 14,467 during 2022/2023, mostly due to secondary fire demand after the hot summer of 2022. The Service continued to work closely with partner agencies to tackle any underlying issues.

Members took assurance from the methodologies and analytical approaches used to performance manage Service activities.

Resolved - That the Annual Performance Report 2023/24 be approved.

69/24 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24 - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report that provided Members with an update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for 2023/24.

The Service reviewed its original EDI priorities in the latter months of 2020, through active consultation with staff and communities. Since April 2021 work towards the five EDI priorities had progressed in line with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2021-25 and Strategic Plan 2021- 2025.

Service 5 Public Sector Equality Duty Priorities

1. Leading by example on equality
2. Increasing diversity throughout our workforce
3. Ensuring a safe and fair workplace for all staff
4. Continuing to improve our knowledge of our diverse communities and how we engage with them
5. Identifying the fire and other emergency risks linked to multiple disadvantage and discrimination

In the upcoming 2024-2025 period, the Service would be entering the fourth and final year of implementing existing priorities aimed at fostering positive outcomes for communities and employees. During that period, the plan was to consult with a diverse range of stakeholders to refresh priorities for 2025 – 2029, in line with updates to both the CRMP and Strategic Plan.

Resolved - That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023/24 be approved.

70/24 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the draft Annual Performance Report.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England set out a requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show they had due regard to the expectations set out in their Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and the requirements included in the Framework.

The Statement of Assurance covered the following areas:

- financial assurance
- governance assurance
- operational assurance

The Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee had considered the draft Statement of Assurance at its meeting of 10 July 2024 and endorsed its publication to the Authority.

Resolved - That the Annual Statement of Assurance 2023/24 be approved.

71/24 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24 - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

It was a requirement of the Fire Authority to publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) on a yearly basis. The report set out the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) in respect to 2023/24 (Appendix 1). Given the content of the Statement, it was felt desirable that the Authority should specifically review the AGS separately from the Annual Accounts.

The AGS set out ensuring that the Authority's business was conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and was making economic, efficient, and effective use of its resources through its governance arrangements. The AGS was the formal Statement (signed by the Chairperson of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and other Statutory Officers) that recognised, recorded and published the governance arrangements of the Fire Authority.

Ultimately, Members were content that the Annual Governance Statement was effective in identifying the Authority's Governance position. It was explained that the Constitution was reviewed on an annual basis including issues of schemes of delegation.

The draft Annual Governance Statement was considered by the GAS Committee at its meeting of 10 July 2024 and endorsed to the Authority.

Resolved - That the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 be approved.

72/24 ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STATEMENT 2023/24 - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report on the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement 2023/24.

Produced in response to the recommendations within an Internal Audit review of Counter Fraud Arrangements, the annual Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement covered key actions taken throughout the reporting year to provide an assurance of the processes in place. The report covered whistleblowing, anti-bribery, anti-money laundering and anti-fraud and corruption.

The draft Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement 2023/24 was considered by the GAS Committee at its meeting of 10 July 2024 and endorsed it to the Authority.

Resolved - That the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement 2023/24 be approved.

73/24 WORKFORCE PLAN UPDATE (OCTOBER 2023 TO MARCH 2024) - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report summarising the draft Workforce Plan.

In March 2024 the Service Workforce Plan was updated reflecting current staffing levels and the retirement profile. It also reflected how the Service met its obligations under the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and optimised the use of the 24-hour shift system.

The Workforce Plan laid out the detail of the Service's position as at 31 March 2024 in relation to the Establishment, vacancies and recruitment plan with consideration for the potential retirement and subsequent resulting recruitment. The document was designed to be a "working document" to enable continual evolution as the Service progresses but was formally updated on an annual basis on 31 March.

Resolved - (a) That Members note the content of the update, and

(b) That Members take assurance that the Service regularly reviews and addresses workforce planning needs through both long-term planning and dynamic response as required.

74/24 VALUES AND CULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE – The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report updating Members on progress made against the recommendations in the 'Values and culture in fire and rescue services' report.

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 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. Information taken from the action plan was used to inform the formal response to HMICFRS, recording the progression and compliance against each recommendation with accompanying narrative.

The Round 3 HMICFRS inspection of the Service included a review of the response to the values and culture report, providing the opportunity to demonstrate compliance alongside the additional progressive work to support culture with notable practices such as the creation of a Service Culture Group to inform and direct. That was accompanied by the appointment of a temporary Professional Standards Manager with the intention of review and develop change management methodologies and restorative practices, in collaboration with the Culture Group.

The Service was one of ten Services subject to HMICFRS thematic misconduct inspection in November 2023. The scope of the inspection included a review of people related policies, desktop reviews, reality testing, staff forums and staff survey. Many of the areas inspected align with the recommendation themes detailed in the spotlight report, providing independent analysis of the position and progress. It was important to note HMICFRS did not issue any graded judgment or individual report for any participating Service, with the feedback provided through a verbal debrief, with a holistic sector report based on the findings from all ten Services originally proposed for publication July 2024.

Alongside HMICFRS reports RealWorldHR, as an independently commissioned provider, delivered a staff engagement exercise and survey achieving a 49% response rate. The feedback generated from the survey was analysed and mapped against HMICFRS report findings to identify arising themes and trends.

Resolved - That the Fire Authority -

- (i) takes assurance that the Service has completed and submitted the formal response to HMICFRS.
- (ii) takes assurance that the recommendation stated as partial compliance awaits national direction and guidance completion.
- (iii) takes assurance that the Service comprehensively manages each of the applicable recommendations which will be subject to scrutiny in the HMICFRS Round 3 inspection.

75/24 BREATHING APPARATUS (BA) PROCUREMENT UPDATE – The Area Manager of Prevention, Protection, Fleet and Estates submitted a report updating Members on the procurement and roll-out of new Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets.

In April 2023 Humberside Fire and Rescue Service began a procurement process to replace the existing Breathing Apparatus sets. That was facilitated through a joint, collaborative, procurement process with North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Collaborative procurement was considered to be best practice, within the sector, as it shared workload and allowed for financial efficiencies to be realised through economies of scale. It also promoted collaborative working on the incident ground through shared equipment and procedures.

The Service had approx. 300 sets in use, across the service, between operational units and our training department. The working life of a set was generally 10 years, however the decision was made to bring forward replacement by a year in order to maximise the collaboration opportunity and to explore new technology availability. In collaboration with NYFRS a procurement process began to evaluate the options and replace the existing sets. The UK BA market comprised of 4 main providers who are: Drager, Interspiro,

MSA and Scott. The current sets were provided by Interspiro. Following the evaluation process, the MSA set came out on top of the process and as such the contract to replace the sets had been awarded to them.

Cross departmental working between Training, Fleet & Equipment, Health & Safety and Emergency Planning was ongoing to manage the roll out and transition. The sets would be at the Service from September 2024 with training taking place to support a go live, with the new sets, on 1st April 2025.

Resolved – That the report be received.

76/24 PROPOSAL TO REDUCE HFA MEETINGS AND CHANGES TO GAS COMMITTEE CO-OPTION PROCESS – The Monitoring Officer and Secretary to the HFA submitted a report with a proposal to reduce the number of HFA meetings, to reduce the number of GAS meetings and changes to the co-option process to GAS committee.

Resolved – That the item be deferred to the next meeting.

77/24 SALE OF LAND – The Area Manager of Prevention, Protection, Fleet and Estates submitted a report requesting the authorisation to sell a small strip of land adjoining Snaith Fire Station.

The report provided information in relation to the recommendation to sell a small strip of land adjoining Snaith Fire Station. The owner of one of the residential properties behind Snaith Fire Station made enquiries about purchasing a small strip of land behind the Fire Station. The strip of land was approximately 5 metres long and 0.5 metres wide. The strip of land was created as the result of a previous extension to the Fire Station and the Station had now been extended as far as is possible in that direction. As a result of the extension that land currently comprised of a space between the back of the Fire Station and a wooden fence that was approximately 5 foot in height. The land was of no practical use to the Fire Station and was in effect dead space. The residential property owner would like to purchase the land with a view to removing the fence in order to widen their driveway by the 0.5 metres mentioned. It was anticipated that this would pose no issues to Service personnel or Snaith Fire Station.

The Service had instructed Clark Weightman Ltd to provide a valuation of the land. That had returned with the land valued at £2000. It was confirmed that Service's legal fees for the sale of the land would be met by the purchaser.

Resolved - That the sale of the strip of land adjoining Snaith Fire Station be approved.

78/24 HMICFRS UPDATE - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report updating Members on the round 3 inspection timetable for HMICFRS.

The report provided insight into His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Round 3 inspection timetable and specifically how the scheduled activities presented the opportunity to demonstrate promising, innovative and good practices, with the potential to influence the resulting graded judgment ratings (*Outstanding, Good, Adequate, Requires Improvement, Inadequate*).

The format and content of the timetable was informed by HMICFRS commencing its inspection 1 August 2024 and concluding 28 September 2024, using hybrid onsite and virtual sessions, with predetermined breaks for the inspection team included.

The timetable of activities were varied in purpose and format which included interviews, desktop reviews, reality testing, presentations and focus group sessions.

Introduced by HMICFRS were the categorisation of promising and innovative practices to provide Services with the opportunity to recode and promote areas of work considered as developing, beyond business-as-usual approaches, defined as follows:

- **Promising Practice:** Things we find to be working well in the Service where there are positive measurable outcomes which have been observed or monitored.
- **Innovative Practice:** New ways of working in the Service that may not have been formally evaluated but that have the potential to produce more positive outcomes but have not been subject to any testing or monitoring.

Members took assurance that the Service, through effective management of the HMICFRS inspection timetable, could incorporate and showcase evidence based promising, innovative and good practices.

Resolved - That the report be received.

79/24 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE - The Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive provided a verbal update.

- i. There had been two separate property fires on 16 July that crews were called to, sadly resulting in the death of a member of the public at each. Investigations were ongoing into both incidents and wellbeing measures were in place to support crews who had attended both properties.
- ii. The new Government was proposing the introduction of national attendance standards. This piece of work was still in its infancy and Members would be updated when further details emerged. The Service was already an outlier across other Fire and Rescue Services in that it achieved on average a 6 to 7 minute response time compared to the national average of 10 minutes.

Resolved - That the update be noted.

80/24 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.

81/24 CONTROL 25 PROGRAMME UPDATE - The Area Manager of Emergency Response submitted a report updating Members on the procurement process to support the Fire Control Function.

Resolved - That the report be received.