

**HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14 OCTOBER 2013**

**PRESENT:** Independent Co-opted Members Mr M Allingham, Mr D Chapman, Mr J Jepson, Mrs M Thomlinson and Mr C Vertigans.

Councillors Briggs and Hodgson attended as observers.

Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Officer/Director of Operations, Secretary/Director of People, Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer, Assistant Chief Officer/Director of Safety, Committee Manager and Mr D Murray (External Audit - KPMG) and Ms Y Mehmood (Internal Audit - H W Controls & Assurance) were also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs G Hardy and Mr D Hughes.

The meeting was held at the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Kingston upon Hull. Meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m.

**4295 CHAIRPERSON** – In the absence of the Chairperson (Mr D Hughes) the Secretary/Director of People invited nominations for the appointment of a Chairperson for this meeting.

**Resolved** – That Mr D Chapman be appointed Chairperson for this meeting.

*(Mr D Chapman took the Chair).*

The Chairperson welcomed all who were observing the meeting.

**4296 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations.

**4297 MINUTES** – **Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 2013, having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairperson.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES, OTHER THAN ON THE AGENDA**

**4298 Sickness Absence 2012-13** – The Secretary/Director of People referred to Minute 4254 and stated that there was no report available for this meeting due to continuing difficulties in extracting comparable information from the new Firewatch system. However, it appeared that the total days lost due to sickness in all staff groups was falling slightly from the level previously reported to this Committee. A report would be submitted to the next meeting.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

**4299 Update: Matters Arising/Feedback From Fire Authority** - The Chairperson referred to Minute 4256 and queried when the Committee might receive a response to the expectations this Committee had raised.

**4300 UPDATE: MATTERS ARISING/FEEDBACK FROM FIRE AUTHORITY** - The Secretary/Director of People submitted a report summarising the consideration given by the Authority to the report presented by the Chairperson of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee and the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 September 2013. The Secretary/Director of People referred to Minute 4255 (Accountability of Chief Fire Officer) and stated that the Group Secretaries had not yet met but that he had passed on to the Chairperson of the Fire Authority the information supplied to him by the Chairperson of this Committee.

The Chairperson stated that the difficulty for Members of this Committee today was about understanding what the views of the Authority were with regard to the role of this Committee given previous decisions by this Committee and the Fire Authority. The Chairperson reminded Members that at the previous meeting the Committee agreed to support the decision to defer the review of the Role of this Committee until the spring of 2014 and that the Committee would welcome feedback on its performance to date before that review. The Chairperson reported that the Committee felt that it would be of benefit to the Authority if representatives of this Committee were present when the future of the Committee was discussed. The Secretary/Director of People stated that at the Member Day on 4 October 2013 Elected Members had requested that he submit a paper setting out possible options, mainly regarding the scrutiny role, to the next Member Day in November 2013 and that Elected Members would then decide whether they want a report submitting to the full Authority. The Secretary/Director of People briefly explained different options around scrutiny and added if there was not to be pre-decision scrutiny then the Authority would require some form of Audit Committee in any event. A Member stated that the Independent Co-opted Members were only too willing to assist and support the Authority with the benefit of their experience in the best way that they can.

### EXTERNAL AUDIT

**4301 Annual Audit Letter 2012/13** – Further to Minute 4257 Mr D Murray (KPMG – External Audit) presented the final Annual Audit Letter in respect to the Authority's accounts for 2012/13 indicating that the Audit Commission had issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2012/13 financial statements and the Pension Fund 2012/13 financial statements included in the Authority's Statement of Accounts and had concluded that the Authority had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Mr Murray referred to the summary with regard to the level of the audit fee compared to the fee in the Audit Plan and stated that he was currently in negotiation with the Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer regarding some additional work in respect to VAT and the fee for undertaking that work. Mr Murray expressed his thanks to the Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer and his staff for the help provided during the audit.

**Resolved** – That the Audit Letter be noted.

### INTERNAL AUDIT

**4302 Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2013/14** – Ms Y Mehmood (H W Controls & Assurance) reported orally on the progress of the 2013/14 Internal Audit Plan.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

**4303 ICT Disaster and Recovery** – Ms Y Mehmood (H W Controls & Assurance) reported orally that the review of ICT Disaster and Recovery would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

**4304 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 AUGUST 2013** - The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer submitted a report containing the Authority's Management Accounts and Prudential Indicators for the period ending 31 August 2013. The summary estimated outturn position from the Management Accounts and Prudential Indicators was as follows:

- Revenue Budget - £406k underspend;
- Capital Programme - £7.962m total expenditure against an allocation of £10.711m;
- Pensions Account - £7.464m deficit

A Member referred to the Revenue Statements and sought clarification regarding the traffic light indicators in respect to the budget heading 'Transport'. The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer explained why the indicator had moved from 'green' to 'red'. A

Member sought an update with regard to the purchase of a new Command & Control Vehicle. The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer explained that the cost was included within the capital programme and stated that the vehicle was unlikely to be delivered this year as Officers were still in the process of determining the specific requirements for the vehicle. The Chairperson suggested that it would be helpful if future reports highlighted traffic light movements to 'red'. The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer stated that this week Officers would be carrying out a half year review of the budget and that would give a better feel as to likely expenditure on individual budgets.

**Resolved** – That Members take assurance from the report and the Authority's financial position for the period ending 31 August 2013.

#### **4305 ISO14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STANDARD RE-ACCREDITATION**

- The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer submitted a report providing Members with an update on the recent successful re-accreditation inspection undertaken by the external assessors of the ISO14001 Environmental Management Standard. The Authority had long recognised the importance of the environmental agenda and as reported to the Fire Authority in April 2010, the Strategic Plan 2010-13 saw the incorporation of the commitment to implement an Environmental Management System (EMS) as the means by which the Service would reduce its carbon footprint and manage its resources most effectively. The Service subsequently commissioned a specialist external advisor to undertake a gap analysis assessment against the ISO14001 standard and advise upon implementation of appropriate management systems. Based on that the Authority developed and implemented an EMS with the aim of ensuring the Service fulfilled relevant statutory obligations alongside reducing the organisation's carbon footprint, through focussing on energy consumption, recycling facilities and improved management procedures to prevent contamination of the environment. Following the introduction and embedding of the EMS, the Service was formally audited by BSI Management Systems, as certified external assessors in two phases. The Service successfully achieved accreditation to the ISO14001 Standard in October 2010. Since that date a significant amount of work had been undertaken to ensure environmental awareness was embedded right across the organisation, with the Service's Infrastructure Board assuming responsibility for overseeing the environmental agenda. Regular internal audits had also been undertaken and reported back to the Board. On 28 and 29 August 2013 BSI Management Systems undertook their formal three-year re-accreditation inspection. The audit went extremely well, with no non-conformities being identified and as a result BSI Management Systems had awarded the Service re-accreditation to the ISO14001 Standard for a further three-year period. The full assessment report was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The report indicated that environmental issues remained a key priority for the organisation and the Service's Infrastructure Board would continue to oversee the EMS to ensure the current momentum was maintained and that the necessary requirements of the Standard were adhered to going forward.

A Member referred to the use of an external assessor for cyclical reviews and queried whether that work might be carried out internally. The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer stated that the process was reviewed internally on an on-going basis but that it was felt that there was some benefit in having external cyclical validation. A Member asked when telematics would be installed in the fleet of vehicles and appliances. The Director of Finance & Assets/Section 151 Officer stated that the scheme was out to tender at the moment; that a decision as to a supplier might be taken before Christmas 2013, and that the work would be carried out over a period of 4/5 years. The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, expressed his thanks to all those involved in securing the re-accreditation.

**Resolved** – That Members note that the Authority has successfully achieved formal re-accreditation to the Environmental Management Standard ISO14001.

**4306 GUIDANCE: DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT - OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY ON PERSONAL INTERESTS** –The Secretary/Director of People submitted a report with regard to guidance issued by the Department for Communities & Local Government in September 2013 in respect to Councillors' personal

interests to specifically include union membership (Openness and transparency on personal interests). A copy of the Guidance was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Members were reminded that the Authority had adopted a Member Code of Conduct in July 2012. A copy of that Code was attached at Appendix 2 to the report. The Code included the declaration of personal interests, which included any political party or trade union membership. That was included in the annual Declaration of Member Interests (which all Members were asked to complete in readiness for the Annual General Meeting of the Authority (or as soon as possible thereafter). Within the local government community, the revised Guidance had caused some debate around the need for the Guidance, particularly in respect to disclosure of trade union membership. On the face of the Guidance, there were no immediate issues for the Authority. During 2013/14 there would be a review of the Code of Conduct in any event.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

**4307 INSPECTION OF MEMBER REGISTERS** – The Member Registers of Interests and Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality were made available for inspection by any Member of the Committee as part of their monitoring role.

**4308 INSPECTION OF OFFICER REGISTERS** – The Officer Registers of Interests and Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality were made available for inspection by any Member of the Committee as part of their monitoring role.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**4309 Industrial Action - Update** – The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive reported orally that notice had been given that the next industrial action by firefighters would take place on Saturday, 19 October 2013 and assured the Committee that arrangements were in place to provide as good a service as was made available on the previous occasion.

**4310 Venue for Committee Meetings** – The Chairperson reminded Members that it had been intended to hold this meeting at the East Riding Community Protection Unit, Beverley and to take the opportunity to meet the H R Solutions' team and suggested that perhaps that arrangement could apply for the next meeting of this Committee.

**4311 Community Awards** – The Chairperson on behalf of the Committee expressed thanks to all those recipients of the annual Community Awards and stated that the awards served to show the excellent relationship between the Service and its community partners.

*Meeting closed at 10.43am*