

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY
GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 MARCH 2015

PRESENT: Independent Co-opted Members Mr D Chapman (Chairperson), Mr J Doyle, Mrs G Hardy, Mrs P Jackson, Mr A Smith and Mrs M Thomlinson.

Councillors Briggs and Hodgson attended as observers.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery, Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer/Secretary, Director of Commercial Services, Director of Operations (North), Director of Operations (South), Director of Service Support, Corporate Planning and Performance Manager, Committee Manager, Ms J Rae (External Audit – KPMG) and Ms B Jones (Internal Audit - MIAA) were also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Allingham and Mr C Vertigans.

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

(The Chairperson welcomed all who were observing the meeting.)

PROCEDURAL

4766 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - No declarations were made in connection with any of the items to be considered at the meeting.

4767 MINUTES – Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 February 2015 having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairperson.

4768 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES, OTHER THAN ON THE AGENDA – There were no items.

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME

4769 Scrutiny Programme 2014/15 – Human Resources: Part 1: Advisory and Transactional Services & Part 2: Succession Planning – Final Report – Further to Minute 4740 the Chairperson submitted a draft Final Report indicating that as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme 2014/15 discussed at the Governance, Audit & Scrutiny Committee of 9 June 2014, it was agreed that Human Resources would be a topic for scrutiny by the Committee. A scoping discussion took place at the Committee on 15 September 2014 and it was agreed two aspects should be scrutinised in more detail:

- (i) The Firewatch HR IT system
- (ii) Succession Planning, including equality of opportunity

Scrutiny information was gathered from two presentations to the GAS Committee and accompanying discussions with members of the Service management team. The scrutiny undertaken provided Members of the GAS Committee with assurance that the Service is committed to modernising systems and developing staff to underpin service redesign and improve outcomes. The draft report identified a number of areas however, which the GAS Committee considered that the Authority could consider with a view to further improving or bringing forward anticipated benefits.

Resolved – That the scrutiny report and its recommendations be approved and be referred to the Fire Authority.

4770 Scrutiny Programme 2015/16 – The Monitoring Officer/Secretary referred to the discussion at the workshop for Members of the GAS Committee held on 6 February 2015 regarding the scrutiny programme for 2015/16 and reported that one topic was identified, namely “Business Safety”. It was considered that the first step should be to look to produce a narrower scope for the scrutiny work. It was intended that the first stage (scoping of the review) would be held after the meeting of the Committee to be held on 13 April 2015 when officers from Technical Fire Safety would meet informally with Members of this Committee and give an initial presentation on Technical Fire Safety in order to obtain a better understanding of the areas the Committee wishes to scrutinise. Ms B Jones, Internal Audit (MIAA) stated that fortuitously the April meeting of the GAS Committee would receive the Internal Audit Annual Report which might also inform the scrutiny process. The Executive Director of Service Support/Section 151 Officer asked if there were any specific matters that the Committee would wish to be included in the scrutiny. A Member suggested that false Automatic Fire Alarms might usefully be considered. The Chairperson suggested that other matters might arise from the initial presentation by officers on 13 April 2015.

Resolved – That the report and the arrangements for the initial discussions with officers on 13 April 2015 be noted.

GOVERNANCE

4771 FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER DAY – The Monitoring Officer/Secretary informed the Committee that the following matter had been briefly discussed at the Member Day on 27 February 2014:

- GAS Committee Development Plan – Update

Resolved – That the report be noted.

4772 UPDATE: MATTERS ARISING/FEEDBACK FROM FIRE AUTHORITY – The Monitoring Officer/Secretary submitted a report summarising the consideration given by the Authority at its meeting on 16 February 2015 to the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 February 2015 and also providing feedback on other items considered by the Fire Authority.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

4773 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015-16 - The Director of Service Support presented a report by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive providing a proposed Pay Policy Statement for Humberside Fire Authority for 2015/16, as required by the Localism Act 2011, for consideration and recommendation to 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 the Authority was first produced for 2012/13 and approved by the Authority 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 Authority for consideration. The proposed statement for 2015/16 now reflected the pay details for the revised Corporate Management Team (CMT) posts as agreed by the Authority on 16 February 2015.

Questions by Members seeking clarification of aspects of the report were answered by Officers.

Resolved – That it be a recommendation to the Fire Authority that the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2015/16 attached at Appendix 1 to the report now submitted be approved.

AUDIT

4774 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 JANUARY 2015 - The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer submitted a report containing the Authority's Management Accounts and Prudential Indicators for the period ending 31 January 2015. The end of year projections were set out for the revenue budget, the capital programme and the pensions account. The summary estimated outturn position from the Management Accounts and Prudential Indicators was as follows:

- Revenue Budget - £1.159m underspend;
- Capital Programme - £5.627m total expenditure against an allocation of £12.056m;
- Pensions Account - £8.445m deficit.

Resolved – That Members take assurance from the report and the Authority's financial position for the period ending 31 January 2015.

4775 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS, TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16 AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) FOR 2015/16 - The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer submitted a report setting out the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management and Capital and the Treasury Management Policy Statement proposed for adoption for the financial year 2015/16. The Authority's Constitution required that the Policy Statement is approved by the full Fire Authority and that responsibility cannot be delegated. The report also outlined the recommended policy to be adopted in respect of creating the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for 2015/16, in line with the statutory requirements set out in The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. In the light of the Icelandic situation in 2008, CIPFA had amended the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice (the Code), Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes and Guidance Notes and the template for the revised Treasury Management Policy Statement. The Fire Authority had formally adopted the revised Code on 15 February 2010. An updated version of the Code was published in November 2011 and the strategy statement had been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the new Code.

Ms B Jones, Internal Audit (MIAA) referred to paragraph 9 of Appendix 1 to the report relating to the policy on the use of external service providers and reminded the Committee that one of the comments in their audits related to the need for the Authority to obtain some assurance from Hull City Council regarding the assurance arrangements that Council has in place with regard to investment and borrowing transactions exercised on behalf of the Authority. Ms Jones suggested that it would be appropriate to make a reference to the assurance arrangements in paragraph 9 of the report now submitted. The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer confirmed that the Authority had a written agreement with Hull City Council on their roles and responsibilities and agreed that that could be referred to in the report. A Member sought clarification regarding Indicator 4 – Incremental Impact of Capital investment decisions. The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer explained what Indicator 4 meant and agreed to email the Member a brief analysis by way of further clarification. A Member referred to paragraph 13 (a) relating to Indicator 5 – Authorised Limits for external debt and queried whether there was any significance in the 'Other Long term Liabilities' reducing over the period 2014/15 – 2017/18. The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer explained that the reduction was due to the number of long term leases declining.

Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion in paragraph 9 of Appendix 1 to the report of a note regarding the assurance arrangements in place with Hull City Council, Members take assurance from the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management and Capital Expenditure at paragraphs 12 and 13, the MRP calculated for 2014/15 at paragraphs 15-19 and Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report now submitted as the basis for the Authority's Treasury Management activities in 2015/16.

INTERNAL AUDIT (MIAA)

4776 Internal Audit Update – Ms B Jones (Internal Audit - MIAA) submitted a report outlining internal audit activity since the last meeting as follows:

Internal Audit Plan 2014/15 – Summary Progress Update - The Internal Audit Control Schedule was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The schedule reflected the completion of the following review:

- Performance Management/Data Quality (Phase 1) – the finalised report was attached at Appendix 2 to the report and indicated that the assurance level provided was significant with recommendations made to update procedure notes and strengthen data quality routines.

The audit of Business/Community Safety was at draft report stage and the reviews of Executive Governance Arrangements and Mobile Computing were nearing completion. The remaining planned reviews were due to commence this month

Internal Audit Plan 2015/16 – Consultation - A three year strategic Internal Audit Plan was approved by the Fire Authority on 25 April 2014. As part of the usual annual refresh both the Corporate Management Team and this Committee had been requested to offer comments to shape the plan during January and February 2015. The latest version was attached at Appendix 3 to the report which the Committee was asked to formally review prior to its submission to the Authority for approval on 16th March 2015. Members commented on aspects of the proposed Internal Audit Plan coverage set out at paragraph 2.2 of Appendix 3 to the report but following discussion with Officers and Ms B Jones agreed that no amendments were necessary at this stage.

Resolved – (a) That the Committee notes the progress with the 2014/15 Internal Audit Plan, and

(b) that it be a recommendation to the Authority that the 2015/16 Internal Audit Plan be approved.

4777 SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND RISK REPORT END OF THE 3RD QUARTER 2014/15 – 1 APRIL 2014 – 31 DECEMBER 2014 - The Corporate Planning and Performance Manager submitted a report providing information relating to the Service's Performance and Risk Framework as highlighted in the following table:

Section 1 – Strategic Risks	
Reduction in external financial support.	No change in risk.
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)	ESMCP, which is being managed nationally, will replace the existing Airwave communication system with a new Emergency Services Network. The success of this is critical to the Service. There are additional concerns that the cost share between Government and the Authority is not yet known.
Section 2 – Prevention Performance	
SPI 1 Number of Automatic Fire Alarms	8.4% below the 3 year average.
SPI 2 Accidental Dwelling Fires	6.9% below the 3 year average.
SPI 2a Other Accidental Fires (exc. Vehicles)	14.5% below the 3 year average.
SPI 3 Deliberate Primary Fires	20.7% below the 3 year average.
SPI 4 Deliberate Secondary Fires	32.5% below the 3 year average.
SPI 5 Number of Fatalities	6 fatalities against aspirational target of zero.
SPI 6 Number of Injuries	22 injuries against aspirational target of zero.
Section 3 – Response Performance	
SPI 16a First engine response	8.01% better than objective.

SPI 16b Second engine response	10.29% better than objective.
Section 4 – Projects Update	
Key projects are reported in this section	On track apart from ARK
Section 5 – Absence Statistics	
Key data is reported in this section	Worsening for WDS and non-operational, improving for RDS and Control.

Further detailed information was contained within the body of the report.

Members discussed aspects of the absence statistics and sought clarification of the action being taken by the Service. Officers assured Members that the Service was taking a proactive approach to identifying and understanding the causes for the absences and addressing any issues identified.

Resolved – That the Committee endorses the quality of the data presented in the report and takes assurance as to the Service’s proactive approach to performance and risk management.

4778 HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY REPORT – 3RD QUARTER 2014/15 – OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2014 - The Director of Operations (South) submitted a report presenting at Appendix 1 to the report the 3rd Quarter 2014/15 report on Health and Safety. The report was submitted to the Committee so that Members could provide an additional level of scrutiny to the information provided within it, and make any recommendations to the Fire Authority as deemed appropriate. The report also contained a summary of the Health and Safety Laboratory Climate Survey, which received a 26% return rate from all staff (307 in total).

Resolved - That the report be accepted.

4779 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.

4780 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.

4781 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – There were no items.

4782 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – Resolved – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item (Minute 4783) on the grounds that it is likely to involve the 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 Committee 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).

4783 HFR SOLUTIONS’ PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2014 - The Director of Commercial Services submitted a report indicating that as agreed previously by the Authority the report had been structured to outline the performance of HFR Solutions’ operations and service delivery within each operating quarter and covered the following four main areas of activity: Business; Training; Community and Risk.

Resolved – That this Committee takes assurance from the report that HFR Solutions’ is continuing as a highly successful business, capable of effectively supporting Humberside Fire & Rescue Service’s delivery requirements across both the business and residential communities of the area.

Meeting closed at 11.34 a.m.

