

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY
GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

12 JUNE 2023

PRESENT: Independent Co-opted Members Chris Brown, Melissa Dearey, Nigel Saxby, and Gerry Wareham.

Officers Present: Matthew Sutcliffe – Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services, Steve Duffield – Area Manager of Service Improvement, Jon Henderson – Area Manager of Prevention, Protection, Fleet and Estates, Jason Kirby – Area Manager of Emergency Response, Martyn Ransom – Joint Deputy Chief Finance Officer & Deputy S.151 Officer, Simon Rhodes – Head of Corporate Assurance, Gareth Naidoo – Senior Corporate Assurance Officer, Emma Appleton – Deputy Monitoring Officer/Secretary, and Rob Close – Committee Manager.

Councillor Briggs was also in attendance.

The meeting was held at the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Kingston upon Hull.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer & Secretary took nominations to appoint a Chair for the ensuing year 2023/24.

28/23 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON FOR THIS MEETING – Resolved - That Chris Brown be appointed Chair of the GAS Committee for the year 2023/24.

Chris Brown took the chair.

29/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Apologies for absence were received from Kathryn Lavery.

30/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – No declarations of interest were made with respect to any items on the agenda.

31/23 MINUTES – *Resolved* – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

32/23 GAS COMMITTEE WORKSTREAMS & SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2023/24 – The Committee Manager presented the GAS Committee Workstreams & Scrutiny Programme 2023/24.

Resolved – That Scrutiny Programme 2023/24 be approved.

33/23 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (UNAUDITED) 2022/23 – The Committee received a report of the Deputy Joint Chief Finance Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer detailing the unaudited annual statement of accounts 2022/23. Officers were pleased to have completed the statement of accounts for 2022/23 and prepared for the audit of the accounts to commence mid-June. The Committee was advised that the Authority underspent during the period 2022/23 despite significant inflationary pressures.

It was clarified that the level of reserves was risk assessed as part of the medium-term resources strategy and that uncertainty moving forwards in relation to grant funding and inflation presented challenges to the Authority. The Authority was satisfied that the reserves earmarked for insurance would be sufficient for excess of cyber security.

Further narrative detail in relation to the red service performance summary data was available in the annual report and a link would be added to the accounts. Additional accessibility benefits to improve access to the weblinks would also be added.

It was clarified that the public works loan board interest rates were fixed, however the Authority sought to avoid borrowing where possible.

Resolved – That the unaudited annual statement of accounts 2022/23 be received.

34/23 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2022/23 – The Committee received a report of the Area Manager of Service Improvement summarising the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022/23. The Committee was advised that, once finalised, the statement of account would be published to satisfy requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

While the Statement of Assurance did not itself engage external stakeholders, elements under the three key aspects that made up the statement (financial, governance and operational assurance) went through a rigorous stakeholder engagement exercise (ie Community Risk Management Plan and auditing of the Statement of Accounts etc.).

Resolved – That the Committee endorse the Statement of Assurance 2022/23 to the Fire Authority.