

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

20 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:

Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

Councillors Chadwick, Finlay, Green, Jefferson JP, Matthews, Sharpe, Smith and Turner

Representing Kingston upon Hull City Council:

Councillors Dad, Fudge and Mathieson

Representing North Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Briggs (Chairperson), Grant, Shepherd and Sherwood

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Jackson and Waltham MBE

Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery, Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer, Director of Public Safety (Temporary), Director of Service Support, Monitoring Officer/Secretary, Committee Manager and Mr D Chapman (Chairperson of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee) were also present.

Mr J Doyle, Mr A Smith, Mrs M Thomlinson, Mr C Vertigans (Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee) also attended as observers.

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Belcher, Burton, Clarkson, Sutton and Wilson.

The meeting was held at the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Kingston upon Hull. Meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m.

(The Chairperson welcomed the Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee and all others present.)

5633 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations.

5634 MINUTES – Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 22 September 2017 having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairperson.

5635 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS - The Monitoring Officer/Secretary stated that no questions had been received from Members in accordance with Rule 12, Part 4 of the Constitution.

5636 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS - The Monitoring Officer/Secretary stated that no petitions had been received and no requests for a deputation had been received under Rule 13, Part 4 of the Constitution.

COMMUNICATIONS

5637 Integrated Care Centre, Hull – ‘Topping Out’ Ceremony – The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive reported orally that the ‘Topping Out’ ceremony for the Integrated Care Centre, Hull was taking place today and that the Fire Service was being represented by J Kirby (Head of Operational Response – North Bank) . The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive stated that he would be looking for an opening ceremony to which Members of the Authority will be invited in due course.

5638 Retirement of External Audit (KPMG) Staff – The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer reported orally that he had been informed that Ms J Rae and Mr J Prentice would be retiring from KPMG with effect from the end of November and December 2017 respectively and that there will be two new representatives from KPMG from 1 December 2017.

5639 MEMBERS’ NEWSLETTER – This item was included on the Agenda to allow Members an opportunity to ask questions regarding any items included in the Members’ Newsletter that had been emailed recently to all Members of the Authority. There were no questions.

5640 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2017/18 – BASED ON PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2017 – The Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer submitted a report highlighting the current financial position based on information to 30 September 2017. The end of year projections for the revenue budget, the capital programme and the pensions account were as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>2017/18 Outturn Projection</u>
HFA	
Revenue Budget	£141k overspend
Capital Programme	£4.156m expenditure against £7.230m allocation
Pensions Account	£13.723m deficit

The report indicated that the remaining reporting cycle frequency for the Management Accounts for 2017/18 will be as shown in the table below:

<u>Period Ending</u>	<u>Authority Meeting</u>
31 December 2017	12 February 2018
28 February 2018	23 April 2018

A copy of the accounts for the period ending 30 September 2017 was published as additional information alongside the Agenda papers for this meeting on the Authority’s website.

Resolved – That Members take assurance from the report and the Authority’s financial position for the period ending 30 September 2017.

5641 RESPONSE TO THE 2018/19 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT CONSULTATION AND UPDATE ON THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2018/19 ONWARDS – The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive presented a joint report by the Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer and himself setting out the Authority’s formal response to the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation and also updating Members with regard to the latest work on the MTFP for 2018/19 onwards. The report reminded Members that on 14 September 2017 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had issued a Technical Consultation Paper on the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement (copy attached at Appendix 1 to the report). The consultation period was until to 26 October 2017 and the consultation covered a total of 13 Questions, 3 of which were relevant to Fire and Rescue Authorities. Members were reminded that as indicated at the Member Day held on 6 October 2017 the 3 Question areas relating to Fire and Rescue Services were as set out in the report. The report outlined the suggested response to each question and also proposed supporting evidence. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive reported orally that the Chairperson of the Authority and himself had attended a conference last week when a Home Office representative had encouraged Fire Authorities to ask for flexibility to raise their precept and also informed Members that there might be a future consultation regarding a future funding formula for fire authorities. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive also informed Members that it was proposed to carry out more work on the proposed evidence to

be submitted in support of the response to the consultation questions prior to the response being submitted.

The report also stated that work was ongoing on the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2018/19 and that the main activity centred on the validation of the pay budget and work with the four constituent local authorities to gain an early insight into the likely council tax base for 2018/19. The draft detailed revenue budget for 2018/19 onwards will be brought to the 8 December 2017 Authority meeting for consideration by Members.

Resolved – (a) That Members approve the following response as the Authority's formal response to the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation:

Question 1 - Do you agree that the government should continue to maintain the certainty provided by the 4-year offer as set out in 2016/17 and accepted by more than 97% of local authorities?

Response – *The Authority welcomes the certainty provided by 4-year settlements and would support their continuation.*

Questions 9 and 10 - Do you have views on council tax referendum principles for 2018/19 for principal local authorities? Do you have views on whether additional flexibilities are required for particular categories of authority? What evidence is available to support this specific flexibility?

Response (combined response for Questions 9 and 10) - *Fire Authorities should be given additional flexibility to raise their Band D precept by up to £10. A £10 annual increase would for Humberside residents equate to an additional 83 pence per month on a Band D property or 56 pence per month on a Band A property.*

(b) that it be noted that the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive will review the evidence to support the response prior to its submission to the DCLG.

5642 ABSENCE MANAGEMENT – The Director of Human Resources submitted a report, further to Minute 5629, giving a response to a report received from Capsticks Advisory Service who undertook a project to manage sickness absence in the Service for a short period of time in order to focus attention on the issue, as well as undertake a review of the roll out and efficacy of the Sickness Absence Policy and a training needs analysis of management capability in this area. The report introduced the Action Plan which had been developed to address the issues raised in the Capsticks Report. Members were reminded of the decision taken to commission Capsticks Human Resource Advisory team to undertake the absence management work stream for a 3 month period which began at the end of February 2017 and that the work was extended for a further 2 months to support completion of key work streams and to ensure a smooth transition of the work to the newly appointed HR Service Partners and completed on 31 July 2017. It was planned that the work would leave a legacy for the Service of up to date case work for absence management cases, as well as a detailed plan for any required amendments to policy and management training in the future, which will then be supported and delivered by the HR Service Partners coming into post. At the Authority meeting on 22 September 2017, Members were given the initial response to the Capsticks Report, as it had only been finalised in the days running up to the meeting, so the plan was not complete at that point. At the Member Day on 6 October 2017, Members had received a presentation from the Director of Human Resources detailing the Action Plan and response and were given the opportunity to informally debate the content and make comment for amendment prior to it coming to the Authority meeting. The final version of the Action Plan following amendment was attached at Appendix 1 to the report now submitted.

A Member expressed thanks to the Director of Human Resources for her action in engaging Capsticks which has resulted in the Authority now knowing where problems exist with regard to the management of sickness absence. Members congratulated the Director of Human Resources on the excellent Action Plan and the assurances that the Plan will work and be successful.

Resolved – (a) That Members note the content of the Report and the Action Plan and take assurance from the actions taken and planned in the HR Directorate to improve the management of absence and the support offered to staff who are unwell, and

(b) that an update on progress on implementing the Action Plan be submitted to each meeting of the Authority.

5643 THE UNITED NATIONS HEFORSHE MOVEMENT - The Director of Human Resources submitted a report indicating that on 25 September, 2017 Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) became the first Fire Service worldwide to be 'counted in' and pledge working towards gender equality, through the United Nations HeForShe movement. This is a worldwide movement with the intention of ending inequalities in gender. The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and Chairperson of the Authority had signed up to pledge Humberside's intention of ending inequalities because of gender and to commit to be an "Advocate" for HeForShe by encouraging other Fire and Rescue Services to sign up for their own pledges. The report stated that the HFRS is known within the local communities it serves as a "can do", supportive organisation that will help, rescue or support any person regardless of colour, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or any other characteristic, protected or otherwise. The Service would like to use these ethos to make positive changes within Services by capturing the momentum that it provides. HFRS was, therefore, asking its male workforce to support female colleagues, at all levels, across all areas of the Service and for all to stand shoulder to shoulder to end gender inequality. By standing together in this way, the Service can evolve its fire family for the better for all concerned. The HFRS commitment to the campaign has been shared with other Fire Services at the National Fire Chief Council Autumn Conference and the National Fire Chief Council Workforce conference. The NFCC Workforce Committee has agreed to support this work and the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive will be taking a paper to the NFCC on 25 October 2017 to encourage all Fire and Rescue Services to do the same. The Service pledges signed by the Chairperson of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive Officer are:

- i) To do our best to increase the numbers of women both applying for and being recruited to firefighter positions in our Service, and to better understand the reasons why they don't apply or are not successful when they do;
- ii) To improve the engagement, experience, development and promotion opportunities of and for the women in our workforce.

A Member suggested that this was an important issue which should be referenced in the response to the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement Consultation (Minute 5641 above refers) in that it is not only about finance but also about transforming a Fire Service.

Resolved - (a) That Members acknowledge and support the Service's pledge of working towards gender equality using the United Nations HeForShe movement as a vehicle to do so and support the "Advocate" work by encouraging other Fire and Rescue Services and their own authorities to sign up and make their own pledges;

(b) that it be noted that individual Members can assist the campaign for equality by signing up to be 'counted in' by visiting the HeForShe website on www.heforshe.org, and

(c) that Members record their appreciation to Ms N Parkinson (Corporate Planning Support) for her role in raising this matter and driving it through the organisation.

5644 MEMBER CHAMPIONS 2017/18 - The Executive Director Service Support/ Section 151 Officer presented a joint report by the Monitoring Officer/Secretary and himself providing further detail regarding the Member Champion role discussed at the Member Day held on 6 October 2017. With regard to Member Roles the report indicated that Members are currently used to support the activities of the Pension Board (Cllr Shepherd) and the Equality

and Inclusion Steering Group (Cllr Sharpe). In addition, Cllrs Sutton and Matthews act as Directors on the HFR Solutions Board. Based upon the experience of the current Member Champion arrangements the report stated that it was now timely to consider broadening the approach to incorporate other areas of the Service. In particular, it was recognised that this will act to strengthen the Member/Officer partnership in Service delivery planning and scrutiny. The report outlined the benefits for Members and Officers and proposed that the following additional areas of the Service, described within the Strategic Plan 2018/21, would benefit from a Member Champion allocation:

Service Delivery Area	Proposed Member Champions
Value Our People & Equality and Inclusion Steering Group	*3
Responding Effectively	**4
Support Delivery	2
Make our Communities Safer	**4
Manage the Service Financially	2
Manage the Service Corporately	2
Mental Health and Wellbeing	1
	18

* This area includes the current Member Champion role on the Equality and Inclusion Steering Group.

** The areas of Responding Effectively and Make our Communities Safer would benefit from one Member for each Local Authority area.

It was proposed that the Chairperson of the Authority will not have an allocated Member Champion role, in recognition of the corporate governance/leadership relationship with the Chief Fire Officer and Executive Directors. It was suggested that once the governance arrangements to bring the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) onto the Authority have been finalised, Members might wish to consider a Member Champion role for the PCC at that point. A generic outline role description was included at Appendix 1 to the report. If the recommendations within the report are approved, Member development sessions will be arranged and Directors will develop bespoke role descriptions.

A Member suggested that it might be helpful if Members could attend other Member Champion meetings with the respective Director as observers.

Resolved - (a) That Members endorse the approach to broaden the role of Member Champions described within the report now submitted;

(b) that to assist Members in deciding which Member Champion role their individual skills and expertise might be most appropriate the Executive Director Service Support/Section 151 Officer will circulate to all Members a copy of the draft Strategic Plan which provides further details of the Service Delivery areas inviting Members to nominate themselves for one of the Member Champion roles;

(c) that following the receipt of nominations the Chairperson, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, will consider allocating Members to the various roles and submit a schedule of the initial allocations to the December 2017 meeting of the Authority, and

(d) that it be noted that Councillor Sharpe would wish to nominate herself as an additional Member Champion for Mental Health and Well Being.

5645 DYING TO WORK PLEDGE - The Director of Human Resources presented a joint report by the Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive and herself indicating that the Dying to Work pledge is a Trade Union Congress (TUC) National campaign and that Employers were being encouraged to voluntarily sign up to the charter. By way of background the report indicated that many workers get a serious illness at some point in their working lives and

might require time off, often many months, to get treatment or recover. The TUC have produced good guidance to support individual cases of long term illness, or return to work for those who are disabled as a result of an illness or injury. However sometimes there is no effective treatment. In these cases the individual might face a time of huge emotional stress, fear and uncertainty. Being told that you are to die as a result of a disease for which there is no cure or effective treatment and that you only have months, or at best a year or so to live is a traumatic event and everyone will react differently. Trade Unions, together with organisations try to ensure that when that happens, they try to remove any additional stress and worry. Sometimes the nature of the illness is such that the person is unlikely to be able to work again. In other cases, a person might decide that they do not want to work anymore and would rather spend their remaining time with their family and friends, getting their affairs in order, or simply doing what they want. However, a lot of workers with a terminal diagnosis decide that they want to continue working as long as they can, either because they need the financial security or because they find that their work can be a helpful distraction from their illness. Whichever choice a person makes, they should be able to expect help and support from their employer. Unfortunately the experience of many workers is that their employer is either unsympathetic or puts up barriers to them continuing in work. If a worker with a terminal illness loses their job they lose their income. They can also lose any death in service payments they have earned through a life-time of work but are only payable to those that die while still in employment. The report indicated that when signing up to the pledge and the charter employers will:

- Review sick pay and absence procedures, to include a specific statement that they will not dismiss a person with a terminal diagnosis because of their condition;
- Ensure that they have an employee assistance programme that has the capacity and competency to provide support to any person with a terminal illness, including access to counselling and financial advice;
- Provide training to line managers and all HR staff on dealing with terminal illness, including how to discuss future plans with any worker who has a diagnosis of a terminal illness and on what adaptations to work arrangements that may be necessary;
- Adopt the dying to work charter and notify all employees that the organisation will sign up to the commitments contained within it;
- Once the employer and recognised unions are happy that the commitments within the charter have been met, the organisation needs to inform the TUC of the organisations intention to sign and required organisational information.

The Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive stated that there would be a launch event to which Members of the Authority will be invited to attend and in response to a query from a Member undertook to review the wording of the title of the pledge.

Resolved – That the Fire Authority acknowledge and support the Dying to Work Pledge and commit to sign up to the Charter.

Meeting closed at 11.35am