

# HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 25 JUNE 2021

## PRESENT:

### Members

#### **Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:**

Councillors Chadwick, Dennis, Fox, Green, Healing, Jefferson and Smith

#### **Representing Hull City Council:**

Councillors Belcher, Chambers, North, Randall and Singh

#### **Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:**

Councillors Lindley, Patrick, Shepherd and Swinburn

#### **Representing North Lincolnshire Council:**

Councillors Briggs (*Chairperson*), Grant and Sherwood

#### **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside**

Jonathan Evison - Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside Police

### Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Chris Blacksell - Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Jason Kirby - Temporary Director of People and Development, Paul McCourt - Director of Service Delivery, Niall McKiniry - Director of Service Improvement, Kevin Wilson - Executive Director of Corporate Services/S151 Officer, Mathew Buckley - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Gareth Naidoo - Committee Manager

### Also in attendance:

#### **Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

Doug Chapman (presented Minute 85/21) and Andrew Smith were in attendance as observers.

The meeting was held at The Village Hotel, Hessle.

**79/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Dad, Davison and Waltham MBE.

**80/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - Councillor Swinburn declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 95/21 insofar as he was in receipt of a Fire Fighters' Pension.

**81/21 MINUTES - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 4 June 2021 be received as a correct record.

**82/21 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS** - There were no questions.

**83/21 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS** - None received.

**84/21 COMMUNICATIONS** - The following communication was reported:

- (i) **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) - Government Consultation** - The Home Office was seeking views on new proposals to implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1

recommendations on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) in high-rise residential buildings. This new consultation contained proposals to implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report recommendations on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans, that required a change in law to place new requirements on owners or managers of multi-occupied high-rise residential buildings. The Service would provide a response to this consultation and share with Members at the next Member Day.

- (ii) **PCC Police and Crime Plan Consultation** - The Service would be responding to this consultation and a response shared with Members in due course.
- (iii) **Fire England website** - a new [website](#) had been launched by the Home Office which provided links to all Fire and Rescue Services across the UK.
- (iv) **Appointment for Assistant Chief Fire Officer Post** - The post for Assistant Chief Fire Officer had now been put out to advert with the Appointments Committee due to meet on 22 July 2021.
- (v) **Honours to HFRS Staff** - Congratulations were given to Bernadette McKiernan on being awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) and Tony Clark on being awarded a Queen's Fire Service Medal (QFSM) during The Queen's Birthday Honours 2021.

**85/21 DRAFT MINUTES OF GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY (GAS) COMMITTEE - 14 JUNE 2021** - Doug Chapman, Chairperson of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee, presented the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 June 2021.

Under Minute 51/21 reference was made to HFR Solutions and it was requested that Members receive an update on the work of HFR Solutions at a future meeting of the Authority.

**Resolved** - That the draft minutes of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee held on 14 June 2021 be received.

**86/21 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21 (UNAUDITED)** - The Executive Director of Corporate Services/ S.151 Officer submitted the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

The report presented the Authority's full unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 (attached at Appendix 1) and also highlighted below 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 2020/21 was signed and published on the Authority's website on 11 June 2021 which was an excellent achievement given the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was questions whether there had been reduction in payments due to a decline in council tax payments due to Covid-19. There had been a slight reduction in payments but it was felt this deficit was manageable.

**Resolved** - (a) That the officers be thanked for their hard work in preparing the annual statement of accounts;

(b) That the Capital Programme Rephasing as stated at paragraph 9 of the report be approved.

**87/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21** - The Executive Director of Corporate Services/ S.151 Officer submitted the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2020/21.

The Authority's temporary investments totalled £7.0m as at 31 March 2021.

Investment income earned 2020/21

Interest Earned 2020/21	Rate of return 2020/21	Benchmark return 2020/21*	Difference (+ favourable)
£12,155	0.17%	(0.07%)	0.24%

\* Benchmark set as 7 day compounded LIBID

Interest earned during 2020/21 was £48k lower than originally budgeted for in respect of investment activity for the year, due to lower interest rates than anticipated.

The Authority sought 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 were taken out either to replace existing loans which had matured or to fund capital expenditure. Under the Prudential Regime there were no longer centrally imposed limits on borrowing, but individual Authorities were required to determine themselves what was 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 £15.2m for 2020/21, on which £546k of interest was payable. The Authority repaid £634k of PWLB debt upon maturity and took £4.0m of new borrowings during the year. Closing PWLB debt at 31 March 2021 was £16.9m.

Appendix 1 detailed the agreed Prudential Indicators for 2020/21 and the actual figures for 2020/21.

**Resolved** - That the report be approved.

**88/21 ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STATEMENT 2020/21** - The Director of Service Improvement & Monitoring Officer/ Secretary submitted the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement 2020/21.

The annual Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement was produced in response to recommendations within an Internal Audit review of Counter Fraud Arrangements conducted during 2016/17. The Statement covered key actions taken throughout the reporting year to provide an assurance of the processes in place.

The Governance Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee conducted Scrutiny of anti-fraud and corruption measures in 2018 and the report had been considered by the GAS Committee at the meeting held 14 June 2021.

**Resolved** - That the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Statement for 2020/21 as set out at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

**89/21 CORE CODE OF ETHICS FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES** - The Temporary Director of People and Development submitted a Core Code of Ethics following a national The Core Code launched nationally on the 18 May 2021 for Fire and Rescue Services in England developed in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners..

This report provided an overview of the Core Code and the associated Fire Standard as well as providing an outline of how the Service intended to adopt the Core Code.

The Core Code set out five ethical principles, based on the Seven Principles for Public Life but tailored to suit the fire and rescue context. The ethical principles alongside the accompanying guidance provided a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. The five ethical principles were as follows:

- (i) Putting our communities first - we put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.
- (ii) Integrity - we act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.
- (iii) Dignity and respect - making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

- (iv) Leadership - we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.
- (v) Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) - We continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.

The Core Code recognised there were differing governance arrangements and was flexible enough to be adopted by every service. It could be added to but not detracted from, thereby ensuring local values and expectations of behaviours could also be reflected.

**Resolved** - That the report be received and Members receive a more detailed update and training on this at a future Member Day and Authority meetings.

**90/21 PRACTICAL OUTCOMES OF THE GRENFELL PROJECT** - The Director of Service Delivery submitted a report describing the practical and public outcomes of the work that the Service implemented following the Grenfell tragedy of 14 June 2017.

It linked the work that had been carried out by the Business Safety Team and latterly the Grenfell Project Team, with the development of practical improvements to Emergency Response Service Delivery.

The report provided three short examples of how the communities of Humberside had tangibly benefitted from the gap analysis and implementation of findings from the incident and subsequent inquiry. The report also set out refinements that had been made to the planning, equipment and delivery of emergency response interventions.

Members were assured of the practical approach undertaken by the Service to enhance emergency response capabilities, in line with the findings of the Grenfell Inquiry and emergent national best practice.

**Resolved** - That the report be received.

**91/21 NATIONAL FAMILY GROUP PERFORMANCE REPORTING** - The Director of Service Improvement submitted a report that provided an exception report regarding Service performance in the context of national family group performance reporting for the period 2020/21.

National family groups were where Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) of a similar size and with similar issues, worked together to compare performance and shared best practice. However, whilst there were similarities within the group, there were also significant differences within the groups including demographics, geography, and risk profiles which all impacted on performance. Therefore, any direct comparisons relating to performance should be considered indicative only, and subject to further analysis. Staff from the Service were with other family group FRSs to carry out this analysis and share best practice two times per year in addition to the sharing of data and reports.

The Service was in national family group 4, which currently contained 15 FRSs (listed at Appendix A of the report), the group produced quarterly performance reports in addition to an annual performance report. The annual performance report for 2020/21 showed some very positive performance improvements for the Service against important performance indicators.

Members took assurance from the Service performance improvements outlined in the national family group 4 annual performance report 2020/21.

**Resolved** - That the report be received.

**92/21 HMICFRS UPDATE** - The Director of Service Improvement provided the Authority with a verbal update in relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service's (HMICFRS).

The Service was preparing for its next inspection with a substantial data return. A series of workshops had been scheduled for all staff in advance of the inspection. The date of the next inspection had now been confirmed for week commencing 13 December 2021

**Resolved** - That the update be noted.

**93/21 COVID-19 UPDATE** - The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the Service's response to and future plans relating to Covid-19.

The Authority area was seeing an increase in Covid-19 cases, however the impact of staff absence due to Covid-19 was minimal.

The Local Resilience Forum Strategic Coordination Group had now been stood down.

The Service contract with Hull City Hall had been extended to continue assisting in the roll out of the vaccination programme.

**Resolved** - That the update be noted.

**94/21 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.

**95/21 FIREFIGHTERS' PENSIONS REMEDY - IMMEDIATE DETRIMENT GUIDANCE UPDATE** - The Executive Director of Corporate Services/ S.151 Officer submitted a report that outlined the position in relation to the McCloud/Sargeant Employment Tribunal litigation on age discrimination in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 ("the 2015 Scheme").

Members were invited to consider this report and the application of informal Home Office guidance on the Treatment of 'Immediate Detriment' cases issued on 21 August 2020 and updated on 10 June 2021 ("the Immediate Detriment Guidance") in relation to members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 ("the Legacy Schemes").

**Resolved** - That the report be received.