

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY
GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 OCTOBER 2014

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

Councillor Briggs attended as an observer.

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 & Performance Manager, Committee Manager, Ms J Rae (External Audit – KPMG) and Ms B Jones (Internal Audit - MIAA) were also present.

An apology for absence was received from Mr M Allingham.

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.)

4647 NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS - The Chairperson welcomed Mr J Doyle and Mr A Smith who were attending their first meeting:

4648 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - No declarations were made in connection with any of the items to be considered at the meeting.

4649 MINUTES – The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 2014 were submitted.

Resolved – That, subject to the heading to Minute 4610 being changed to refer to “Mersey Internal Audit Agency” instead of “Merseyside Internal Audit Agency”, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 2014, having been printed and circulated amongst the Members, be taken as read and correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairperson.

4650 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES, OTHER THAN ON THE AGENDA – There were no items.

4651 UPDATE: MATTERS ARISING/FEEDBACK FROM FIRE AUTHORITY – The Monitoring Officer/Secretary submitted report summarising the consideration given by the Authority at its meeting on 26 September 2014 to the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 2014 and also providing feedback on other items considered by the Fire Authority. The Chairperson referred to Minute 4605 (Calendar of Committee Meetings 2014/15) and stated that the it was the intention that the Committee will, when appropriate and with all necessary permissions, hold a future meeting at a venue other than the Headquarters. The Chairperson also referred to the recent appointment of new Committee Members and requested that in future the Chairperson should be notified when new Members were being invited to their first meeting,

Resolved – That the report be noted

EXTERNAL AUDIT - (KPMG)

4652 Annual Audit Letter 2013/14 – Further to Minute 4608 Ms J Rae (KPMG) submitted the final Annual Audit Letter in respect to the Authority’s accounts for 2013/14 indicating that the Audit Commission had issued an unqualified opinion on the Authority’s 2013/14 financial

statements; the Pension Fund 2013/14 financial statements included in the Authority's Statement of Accounts, and the Authority's Group which consists of the Authority itself and HFR Solutions and that KPMG had concluded that the Authority had made proper arrangements for securing financial resilience and challenging how to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Ms Rae referred to Appendix 2 to the Annual Audit Letter which summarised the outturn against the 2013/14 planned audit fee.

In reply to a question by a Member Ms Rae confirmed that the Annual Audit Letter did not contain any new matters and that all the content had been previously reported to this Committee and the Fire Authority.

Resolved – That the Annual Audit Letter be noted.

INTERNAL AUDIT – MERSEY INTERNAL AUDIT AGENCY (MIAA)

4653 Internal Audit Update – Ms B Jones (Internal Audit - MIAA) submitted a report outlining internal audit activity since the last meeting as follows:

- (i) Committee Workshop – Key Outcomes - The outcomes from the facilitated workshop session of 4 September 2014 had been presented in a summary report to GAS Committee Members prior to the GAS Committee meeting of 15 September 2014. Ms Jones explained that the report had been circulated for comments and at the time the report now submitted was written it was envisaged that the report would be included on the Agenda for this meeting. However discussions were continuing and therefore the report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee prior to submission to the Authority. The key outcomes of the session included recognition and analysis of the important role undertaken by the GAS Committee as part of the overall governance framework of the Authority. The request to carry out the workshop reflected the Committee's attentiveness to its responsibilities in the continuous development of its operations as facilitated through the proposed development plan and future workshop sessions. GAS Committee Members were committed to setting the tone of constructive challenge in order that good practice and value outcomes are realised and demonstrable to both internal and external stakeholders.
- (ii) Operational Review: Non-Allocated Support Vehicles - The planned review of Non-Allocated Support Vehicles had been finalised and the report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The assurance level provided was significant which represents the positive action by the Authority to establish arrangements to deliver value for money from its non-allocated support vehicles fleet. A number of recommendations (and observations) were made and were reflective of the recency of system developments in this area which require refinement and embedding – particularly with regard to management information now available from its vehicle tracking system.

Members discussed the content of the report. A Member queried how much of the detail included would transfer into management action and suggested that if that were not the case the level of detail provided was not necessary. Ms Jones explained that this was the first audit report produced for the Authority by MIAA and as such the report was indicative of the style and content of such reports although the scope of this particular audit was not necessarily the best example. The Chairperson stated that report was good and comprehensive and suggested that it might be helpful if in future reports the overview section could give a brief indication as to why information is included.

- (iii) Internal Audit Recommendations – Follow-Up - Further to the schedule provided for the Committee on 15 September 2014 of internal audit recommendations made by Haines Watts in relation to reviews conducted in 2013/14, details were set out in Appendix 2 to the report of follow-up work undertaken by MIAA in

respect of combined financial systems and operational efficiency and showed positive progress.

- (iv) Internal Audit Plan Progress - The Internal Audit Control Schedule was attached at Appendix 3 to the report and reflected the recent completion of the review of non-allocated support vehicles, the work in progress on combined financial systems and performance management/data quality. The audit of Business/Community Safety was currently being scoped.

Resolved - That the Committee notes the report's outcomes which underpins their role to monitor the effectiveness of the internal control environment.

4654 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.

4655 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

4656 Visit to Fire Control Room – The Chairperson expressed his thanks for the arrangements that had been made to allow Members of this Committee to visit the Fire Control Room on 15 September 2014.

4657 Induction Training for New Committee Members – The Chairperson referred to the recent appointment of new Members of this Committee and reminded Officers of the need for some induction training and stated that Members of this Committee would be willing to contribute to such a training event.

Meeting closed at 10.37 a.m.

