

### **Report of Chair of Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee met on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 and 7 members attended.

The Chair of the Fire Authority attended as an observer.

The Committee were asked to consider a number of papers and to make recommendations to the HFA if appropriate. Some of the papers that will be presented to the Fire Authority on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2014 were reviewed. This note summarises the salient points. My report should be read in conjunction with the draft minutes of the Committee which contains more detail.

#### **Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising from the HFA Agenda**

The Committee reviewed the minute number 4384 relating to the appointment of the new Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officers. The minute stated that, "*The Chairperson explained that whilst filling the post of Chief Fire Officer that the appointment of a Deputy although not technically within the remit of the Appointments Committee was carried out The Recommendations for both appointments were subsequently approved*".

The Committee believed that the appointment process for the Deputy should have been approved by the HFA.

The Committee were disappointed that there was still no nomination for the position of Directors of Solutions.

The Committee had made various suggestions to the HFA over the past year and some were still awaiting feedback or a firm date when it would be available. In the interest of good governance the Committee asked if these could be listed in the agenda for the next meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014. Included in this list would be the issue of the future of the GAS Committee.

#### **2013/4 Budget and Precept and Medium Term Financial Plan**

At the time of our meeting there was still no firm guidance on the level of Precept that would not automatically require a referendum. However based on the verbal information of the Finance Officer, an increase in precept does not add significantly to the Fire Service income if a referendum was held. It was felt that the HFA should increase the precept so it does not trigger a referendum. This should be viewed in light of fact that we will probably require further expenditure reductions in the future and the cost of a referendum could outweigh the income generated.

#### **Members Allowances**

The Committee were disappointed that the formation of a review panel, previously approved by the HFA early in 2013/4 had not been progressed and recommend that the allowances be frozen for 2014/5 with a firm commitment to review in 2014/5 for implementation in 2015/6.

#### **Health and Safety Quarterly report**

This is a new report which was not necessarily intended to be a routine report to the HFA but could be, if the HFA felt it appropriate. As with the routine Internal Audit reports any significant issues would be raised for your consideration. Since this is a new report it may take a few meetings to refine the presentation of the data. The Committee felt it is a useful document and welcomed its production.

