

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2022

PRESENT:

Members

Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

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

Representing Hull City Council:

Councillors Belcher, Chambers and North

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

Phil Shillito - Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery, Niall McKiniry - Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Christine Cooper - Executive Director of People and Development, Paul McCourt - Director of Service Delivery, Steve Topham - Director of Service Delivery Support, Martyn Ransom - Head of Finance, Matthew Sutcliffe - Head of Corporate Assurance, Lisa Nicholson - Deputy Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Gareth Naidoo - Committee Manager

Also in attendance:

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

Andrew Smith was in attendance as observers.

External Auditor

Gavin Barker - Director - Public Services (Mazars) (presented Minute 8/22)

The meeting was held at The Village Hotel, Hessle.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER MEMBER - The Authority paid tribute to Councillor Vanessa Walker, former Member of the Fire Authority, who had recently passed away.

01/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Dad, Randall, Singh and Waltham MBE

02/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - All Members declared a personal interest in Minute 10/22. Councillor Sherwood declared a personal interest in Minute 19/22 insofar as he is the Chair of the Planning Committee at North Lincolnshire Council.

03/22 MINUTES - Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 3 December 2021 be received as a correct record.

04/22 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS - None.

05/22 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS - None received.

06/22 COMMUNICATIONS - The following communications were reported:

- (i) Levelling-Up - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/ Executive Director of Service Delivery tabled an extract from the 'Levelling-UP the United Kingdom' White Paper, published on 2 February 2022, that might have implications for Fire and Rescue Services. A further report would be brought to the next meeting of the Authority.
- (ii) White Paper on Fire Reform - the publication of the White Paper was still awaited. Once received the Authority would receive a report at a future meeting on its implications.
- (iii) Green Book NJC Pay Settlement - whilst the sector was still awaiting the NJC pay settlement a few staff on Grade 2 would be receive an increase in wage in order to keep them in line with the national minimum wage.
- (iv) Rapid Intervention Vehicle - two new Rapid Intervention Vehicles had established as a result of the 2021 IRMP consultation. Members were invited to view the vehicle after the conclusion of this meeting.
- (v) New Firefighter Applications - it was noted that the level of interest in new firefighter applications was significantly higher than the rest of the sector.
- (vi) Director of Service Delivery - Members were informed that Paul McCourt - Director of Service Delivery would be leaving the Authority to take up the position of Assistant Commissioner at London Fire Brigade. The Authority thanked the Director for his 22 years' service at the Authority.

07/22 PENSIONS BOARD MINUTES OF 31 JANUARY 2022 - Resolved - That the minutes of the Pensions Board, held on 31 January 2022, be received.

08/22 EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21 - Gavin Barker (Mazars) presented the External Audit Annual Report for the period 2020/21.

The Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) summarised the work undertaken by external auditors for the year ended 31 March 2021. Responsibilities of auditors were defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the National Audit Office ('the NAO'). The remaining sections of the AAR outlined how auditors had discharged those responsibilities and the findings from its work, a summary of which could be seen below:

- Opinion on the financial statements - the audit report was issued on 3 November 2021. Audit issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements.
- Value for Money arrangements - Section 3 confirmed that auditors have now completed the work on the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and provided commentary on the Authority's arrangements. No significant weaknesses in arrangements were identified and there were no recommendations arising.
- Wider reporting responsibilities - auditors were yet to receive group instructions from the National Audit Office and therefore were unable to issue the audit certificate until this was formally confirmed. The 2014 Act required auditors to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question them about the accounting records of the Authority and to consider any objection made to the accounts. Auditors did not receive any questions or objections in respect of the Authority's financial statements.

Due to not yet having received group instructions from the National Audit Office, external audit was unable to issue its audit certificate until this was formally confirmed.

Resolved - That the report be received.

9/22 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS - PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2021 - The Head of Finance submitted the management accounts for the period ending 31 December 2021.

The summary estimated outturn position for the current financial year based on information to 31 December 2021 was as follows:

CATEGORY	2021/22 OUTTURN PROJECTION
HFA	
Revenue Budget	£0.442m underspend
Capital Programme	£4.175m expenditure against £7.129m allocation
Pensions Account	£12.940m deficit

This was the third set of Management Accounts for the 2021/22 financial year and the final update would be brought to the Authority based on the period ending 28/2/22.

Further details on all areas were available electronically alongside the agenda papers on the Fire Authority's website at <https://humbersidefire.gov.uk/about-us/fire-authority/meeting-documents>.

Resolved - That the report be received.

10/22 PRECEPT 2022/3 AND MEDIUM-TERM RESOURCE STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2025/26 - The Head of Finance submitted a report that proposed the setting of the 2022/3 Precept and Medium-Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) 2022/23 - 2025/26.

The decision on the 2022/23 precept for the Authority had to be taken in the light of a number of significant factors:

- The Government had set a referendum threshold for 2022/23 of 2 per cent for Fire Authorities. Therefore, any increase at or above this level would require a Humberside area-wide referendum in support, clearly which would have a significant cost implication.
- Secondly, although the Authority had provided for 2.5 per cent pay awards in 2022/23 there remained a significant risk that they could be in excess of this.
- Thirdly, the Authority had suffered a historic reduction in Government support over 2011/12 to 2021/22. Much had been done to respond to this, but the fact remained that the Authority had lost circa £11m of its funding from Government over this period. Future funding settlements beyond 2022/23 were likely to be very constrained for unprotected services such as Fire and Rescue.
- Fourthly, concerns in the medium-term over council tax income and business rates income due to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that sustaining as much as possible the Authority's local income source through council tax precept was vitally important.

In broad terms the budget for 2022/23 to 2025/26 was balanced subject to the following:

- Council tax increases of 1.99 per cent in 2022/23 and 1.99 per cent in 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26;
- Pay awards of 2.5 per cent in 2022/23 and 2.0 per cent in each year from 2023/24 onwards.

The Authority's reserves consisted of the General Reserve (£6.373m at 1 April 2021) and a number of Earmarked Reserves created to meet specific areas of future expenditure (£7.408m at 1 April 2021). As a result of good forward planning by the Authority, the reserves were in a sound position, but they did need to be seen in the context of the current and future significant reductions in Government funding and the major financial uncertainties that still lay ahead. As a percentage of net revenue expenditure, the Authority's reserves were in the lowest quartile when compared to all other English Fire and Rescue Authorities, which meant they were robust but not excessive.

Proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Healing, and

Resolved - (a) That the 2022/23 precept (as set out at Appendix 1 of these minutes) be approved at a 1.99 per cent level higher than the 2021/22 level, and

(b) that the Medium-Term Resource Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26) be approved.

As required under paragraphs 11 and 12 of Schedule 2 Part 11 of the Local Authorities Standing Orders England Regulations 2001, voting was by way of recorded vote

For: Councillors Belcher, Briggs, Chadwick, Chambers, Davison, Dennis, Fox, Grant, Green, Healing, Jefferson, Lindley, North, Patrick, Shepherd, Sherwood, Smith, Swinburn and Jonathan Evison (PCC)

Against: None

Abstain: None

For: 19

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

11/22 FEES AND CHARGES 2022/23 - The Head of Finance submitted a report that set out the proposed revised charges for 2022/23.

In accordance with relevant Fire Service Acts, Fire Authorities had the discretion to charge for special services performed (where there was no immediate threat of fire) and for services relating to training, fire safety and administration. The total income for the Fire Authority generated through those sources was circa £1,000 in 2020/21.

The revised charges proposed at Appendix A reflected the following:

- Staff related costs - charges were normally uplifted in line with the firefighters' pay award. Given that the firefighters' pay award for 2021 was 1.5 per cent, it was proposed that the charge be increased by 1.5 per cent.
- Non-staff related costs - charges uplifted in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021 which was 3.1 per cent.

Fire Service Circular 17/2001 advised Fire Authorities on the charges they could levy when dealing with cases of pension sharing involving serving members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme or pensioners. The charges for 2022/23 would be frozen pending the Local Government pay award for 2021/22. Any increase would be reflected in 2023/24 charges, as shown at Appendix B.

Proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Healing, and

Resolved - That the revised charges as attached at Appendices A and B of the report be approved with effect from 1 April 2022.

12/22 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2022/23 - The Deputy Monitoring Officer/Secretary submitted a report outlining a proposed scheme of allowances to be paid to its Members.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 made provision for Combined Fire Authorities to establish Member Allowances Schemes from May 2003. The Fire Authority had frozen its basic and special responsibility allowances since 2008/09.

Recognising that Members of the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) for Humberside Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside were paid an attendance allowance based on the rates set by the Home Office for attendance at Appeals Tribunals, the Authority

has agreed that the Independent Co-opted Members of the GAS Committee were paid on a similar basis and that they receive an annual allowance (paid monthly rather than an as attendance allowance) calculated on the same basis as that adopted for the JIAC.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the current Members' Allowances Scheme, as of 1 April 2021. The Authority is asked to consider and approve a Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022/23, a proposal of which was set out at Appendix 2.

The Authority was required to have regard to the recommendations made by any Independent Remuneration Panels in relation to any Authority that had an Independent Remuneration Panel that nominated Members to the Fire Authority. The Members' Allowances Schedule for the four Unitary Authorities in Humberside were available for viewing on the respective Unitary Authorities' websites.

Proposed by Councillor Briggs and seconded by Councillor Smith, and

Resolved - (a) That the basic and special responsibility allowances 2022/23 for Members continues to be frozen, and

(b) that the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix 2 of these Minutes, be approved.

13/22 PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT APPOINTMENTS (PSAA) - The Head of Finance submitted a report seeking the Authority's approval to allow Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) to act on the Authority's behalf in selecting and appointing its external auditor.

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA) was an independent company limited by guarantee incorporated by the Local Government Association in August 2014.

The current auditor appointment arrangements covered the period up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts. The Authority opted into the 'appointing person' national auditor appointment arrangements established by PSAA for the period covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

PSAA was now undertaking a procurement for the next appointing period, covering audits for 2023/24 to 2027/28. Before 11 March 2022 all local government bodies needed to decide about their external audit arrangements from 2023/24. They had options to arrange their own procurement and make the appointment themselves or in conjunction with other bodies, or they could join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.

Proposed by Councillor Jefferson and seconded by Councillor Healing, and

Resolved - That Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) be approved to act on the Authority's behalf in selecting its external auditor for the 2023/24 period onwards.

14/22 STATE OF FIRE & RESCUE 2021 - The Head of Corporate Assurance submitted a report which provided an overview of the key findings from the annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England.

This was the third of such reports from Sir Thomas Winsor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services. As well as recommendations for the sector as a whole, there were a number of national recommendations and limited examples of inspection findings from Tranche One of Round Two. It was anticipated that the national recommendations would largely be addressed through the forthcoming White Paper on fire sector reform.

Unlike the previous two State of Fire Reports (HMI Round One Inspections and the thematic inspection of responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic), which were published following the findings from inspecting all Fire and Rescue Services, this most recent report was based on the inspection of the 13 Services within Tranche One, taking place between February and August 2021. A final report would be made by HMICFRS later in 2022, upon completion of the full inspection programme.

Members took assurance from the monitoring and review of arising issues presented in the HMICFRS State of Fire & Rescue 2021 report and pending Fire Reform White Paper.

Resolved - That the report be received.

15/22 SUCCESSION PLANNING - CHIEF FIRE OFFICER - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report setting out a number of areas to be considered in order to appoint a successor to the role of Chief Fire Officer.

The Chief Fire Officer, Chris Blacksell, was employed on a fixed term contract, as approved by the Authority in 2018; that contract terminated on 16 October 2022. The report sets out a number of areas to be considered in order to appoint a successor to the role.

Under the Constitution it was the role of the Appointments Committee to determine a fair and effective recruitment process and to make a recommendation to the Authority regarding the appointment, and the conditions of service.

Resolved - That the Appointments Committee be convened to initiate the process to appoint a new Chief Fire Officer.

16/22 HMICFRS UPDATE - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided the Authority with a verbal update in relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service's (HMICFRS).

HMICFRS would conclude its six-week inspection of the Service later today. This had involved a significant number of staff across the Service and its partners in supporting the inspection regime.

A hot debrief would take place on 23 February 2022 with members of the Strategic Leadership Team and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority to provide key headlines and any causes for concern, if any. It would take a further two to three months for a draft report to be prepared, with the final report being published alongside all other Tranche 2 inspection reports around May 2022.

Thanks were expressed to Auditors, GAS Committee and Fire Authority Members and all staff across the Service for their hard work and contribution to the inspection.

Resolved - That the update be noted and all staff, Members and partners be thanked for their input in supporting the inspection regime.

17/22 COVID-19 UPDATE - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery submitted a verbal report that updated Members on the Service's response to the Pandemic which was seeing a downward trajectory of cases amongst its staff.

The Service was standing down arrangements in supporting health colleagues as these were no longer required. The Falls team was still seeing a high number of incidents across the Authority's area and the benefits such a service brought to its communities.

Resolved - (a) That the update be noted, and

(b) that the venue of future Authority meetings be considered at the next meeting of the Authority on 11 March 2022.

18/22 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.

19/22 EMERGENCY SERVICES HUB - SCUNTHORPE - The Director of Service Delivery Support submitted a report updating Members on the work undertaken to date and the current position on the proposal from North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) to establish an Emergency Services Hub.

Resolved - That the report be received.

Calculation of Precept 1.99% Increase

<u>2021/22</u>		<u>2022/23</u>
£		£
45,088,573	Net Revenue Budget	47,623,935
74,197	Add : Contribution to/(from) General Reserve	40,479
-	Contribution to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	-
45,162,770	Net Budget Requirement	47,664,414
(17,144,339)	Less : Exchequer Assistance	(17,369,534)
	Formula Grant	
(3,992,704)	Less : Business Rates received from Local Authority	(4,748,669)
84,213	Less : Council tax net collection fund (surplus)/deficit	(700,155)
37,979	Less : NNDR net collection fund (surplus)/deficit	465,501
24,147,919	Amount to be raised from Tax	25,311,557
273321.10	Divided by Tax Base	280896.20
£88.35	Band D Council Tax	£90.11
1.99%	Precept Increase over Previous Year	1.99%

<u>2021/22</u>	<u>Tax Band</u>	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2022/23 Increase over -</u>	
			<u>Year</u>	<u>Month</u>
			£p	£p
58.90	A	60.07	1.17	0.10
68.72	B	70.09	1.37	0.11
78.53	C	80.10	1.57	0.13
88.35	D	90.11	1.76	0.15
107.98	E	110.13	2.15	0.18
127.62	F	130.16	2.54	0.21
147.25	G	150.18	2.93	0.24
176.70	H	180.22	3.52	0.29

<u>Collection Fund Balances</u>		<u>2022/23</u>	<u>Collection Fund Balances</u>	<u>Total</u>
£		£	£	£
19,953	East Riding of Yorkshire	10,894,326	340,293	11,234,619
(83,238)	Kingston upon Hull	5,765,959	175,936	5,941,895
54,342	North East Lincolnshire	4,073,594	104,639	4,178,233
(75,270)	North Lincolnshire	4,577,678	79,287	4,656,965
(84,213)		25,311,557	700,155	26,011,712

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022/23 - PROPOSED DRAFT SCHEME FOR PUBLICATION

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 made provision for Combined Fire Authorities to establish Member Allowances Schemes from May 2003.

The Fire Authority, at its meeting of 11 February 2022, agreed that the allowances for Elected Members be frozen at their current level for 2022/23 as set out below.

	£
1. Basic Allowance (per annum)	
All Members	4,457
2. Special Responsibility Allowances:	
a. The Chair of the Authority	11,137
b. The Vice Chair of the Authority	8,356
c. The Chairs of Committees	561
3. Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee	
a. Chairperson of the Committee	£1,680/year (£140 per month)*
b. All other Members of the Committee	£1,480.50 each/year (£123.375 per month)*
4. Childcare & Dependant Carer Allowances (per hour)	
a. Childcare	5.80
b. Dependant	10.40
5. Travel Allowances	
a. Car Allowances - In accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services casual user rate:	
Up to 999cc	0.469**
Over 999cc	0.522**
(up to first 8,500 miles per annum, thereafter £0.144*)	
b. Motorcycle	0.240
c. Bicycle (per mile)	0.05
d. Public Transport	Actual Cost
6. Subsistence Allowances	
Actual cost not exceeding	
a. Breakfast - more than 4 hours before 11.00am	6.46
b. Lunch - more than 4 hours including 12noon to 2.00pm	8.92
c. Tea - more than 4 hours including 3.00pm to 6.00pm	3.50
d. Dinner - more than 4 hours ending after 7.00pm	11.03
e. Overnight (covering 24 hours)	
London #	136.40
Outside London	120.42
f. Out of Pocket Expenses (per night)	4.92

Notes

* Based on 7 meetings a year it recognises that Members of the Joint Independent Audit Committee (JIAC) for Humberside Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside are paid an attendance allowance based on the rates set by the Home Office for attendance at Appeals Tribunals. The Authority has agreed that the Independent Co-opted Members of the GAS) Committee should be paid on a similar basis, and that they receive an annual allowance (paid monthly rather than an as attendance allowance) calculated on the same basis as that adopted for the JIAC. Mileage and bridge toll costs will continue to be met as before. The only exceptions to the above remuneration arrangements for Independent Co-opted Members of the GAS Committee will be on the very rare occasions when they might be asked to attend training arranged for them in support of their role e.g. Treasury Management training when such attendance will qualify for the one-off £26 hourly rate + travel expenses + bridge tolls. In addition, for attendance at HFA Member Days/HFA meetings, GAS Committee Members will be reimbursed for their travel expenses and bridge tolls.

** Not increased by NJC since 1 April 2010

Includes Local Government Association and Annual Fire Conferences overnight attendances outside London.