

# HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 22 JULY 2022

## PRESENT:

### Members

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

Councillors Abraham, Green, Jefferson JP, Smith and West

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

Councillors Belcher, Dad Nicola and Neal

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

Councillors Lindley, Shepherd, Patrick and Swinburn

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

Councillors Briggs (*Chairperson*), Grant and Waltham MBE

### Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Phil Shillito - Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services, Niall McKiniry - Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Christine Cooper - Executive Director of People and Development, Kevin Wilson - Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer, Matthew Sutcliffe - Area Manager of Service Improvement, Simon Rhodes - Head of Corporate Assurance, Jamie Morris - Senior Service Improvement Officer, Gareth Naidoo - Senior Corporate Assurance Officer, Lisa Nicholson - Monitoring Officer/Secretary, Sam Campbell - Committee Manager and Robert Close - Committee Manager. Gavin Barker - Mazars (external audit) attended remotely.

### Also in attendance:

Gavin Marshall of the Fire Brigades Union attended as an observer.

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

**87/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies for absence were submitted from Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Councillors Chambers, Davison, Dennis, Fox, McMurray and Sherwood.

**88/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - Councillor Abraham declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 84/22 insofar as she was a member of the Police and Crime Panel.

**89/22 MINUTES - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 24 June 2022 be received as a correct record.

**90/22 MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Resolved** - That the minutes of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4 July 2022 be received.

**91/22 MINUTES OF THE PENSION BOARD - Resolved** - That the minutes of the Pension Board meeting held on 11 July 2022 be received.

**92/22 MINUTES OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - Resolved** - That the minutes of the Appointments Committee meetings held on 20 July 2022 be approved and Niall McKiniry be appointed to the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

**93/22 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS** - None.

**94/22 COMMUNICATIONS** - The Chairman provided verbal updates on the following item:

- (i) **Pay Award** - Union representatives had rejected the National Joint Council's pay award offer. The Service had written to all members of staff in relation to this issue and the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive had written to local MPs to lobby for a centrally funded increased pay offer.

**95/22 EXTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM** - Gavin Barker (Mazars) presented the External Audit Strategy Memorandum for the year ending 31 March 2022.

The Audit Strategy Memorandum had not significantly changed compared to those of previous years. Most of the associated work had been undertaken in June and July 2022, and the Service was likely to sign off its accounts earlier than many other organisations. The Memorandum focussed on the same three key risks as it had in the previous year, all of which were standard risks for fire and rescue services. Mazars had expressed no concerns around value for money and the audit process would take into account the outcomes of the Service's recent inspection by HMICFRS when the report was published in summer 2022. Mazars expected no changes to the currently agreed fees, and no changes to the Service's materiality.

**Resolved** - That the External Audit Strategy Memorandum be received.

**96/22 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2022** - The Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer submitted a report summarising the management accounts for the period ending 30 June 2022.

The Service estimated the following outturn position for the current financial year:

CATEGORY	2022/23 OUTTURN PROJECTION
HFA	
Revenue Budget	£0.285m underspend
Capital Programme	On budget against £7.292m allocation
Pensions Account	£12.750m deficit

**Resolved** - That management accounts for the period ending 30 June 2022 be received.

**97/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22** - The Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer submitted a report summarising the Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22.

The investment income in 2021/22 was summarised as follows:

Interest Earned 2021/22	Rate of return 2021/22	Benchmark return 2021/22*	Difference (+ favourable)
£15,870	0.18%	0.14%	0.04%

The Service's performance in relation to prudential indicators was summarised in Appendix 1 to the report. The rate of return on the Authority's investments in 2021/22 had been lower than originally budgeted for due to lower interest rates than anticipated. No short-term borrowing was undertaken within the course of 2021/22, however, taking advantage of lower interest rates, the Service had secured a favourable rate of long-term borrowing. Generally, the Service benefitted from a good cash flow and a limited debt pressures.

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

**98/22 DRAFT ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2021/22** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2021/22.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (Revised 2018) set out a requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide annual assurance, based upon the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Guidance on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England (2013), and show they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan and the requirements included in the Framework. The Statement provided assurance around finance, governance and operational matters. The Statement had been considered by the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 4 July 2022.

**Resolved** - That the Annual Statement of Assurance 2021/22 be approved.

**99/22 CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARD 2022** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report detailing the Service's achievement of the Customer Service Excellence Standard for 2022.

The Service had once again achieved the Customer Service Excellence Standard, a certification it had held since 2009. The Service had been assessed as having seven areas of good practice and four of 'compliance plus'.

**Resolved** - (a) That the report be received;

(b) that the Service's staff be congratulated for their hard work in achieving the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

**100/22 REDUCTION OF UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS** - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer submitted a report detailing how the Service had addressed unwanted fire signals.

In April 2019, the Authority had approved the Unwanted Fire Signals Reduction Policy and, on 1 October 2019, the Service had released a position statement to clarify how it would implement it. The approach detailed in the policy had resulted in a 25 percent decrease in unwanted fire signals, from 1,402 in 2018/19 to 1,045 in 2021/22. The capacity released by the reduction of unwanted fire signals had enabled the Service to undertake significantly more prevention and protection activities. While, in 2018/19, operational crews had undertaken 6,453 prevention activities, this had risen to more than 15,000 in 2021/22. It was proposed that, at the Member Day due to be held on 9 September 2022, the Authority consider options to further reduce false alarms from commercial premises by reviewing the non-attendance aspect of the position statement.

**Resolved** - (a) That the report be received, and

(b) that, at the Member Day due to be held on 9 September 2022, the Authority consider options to further reduce false alarms from commercial premises by reviewing the non-attendance aspect of the position statement.

**101/22 FIRE STANDARDS SUMMARY REPORT** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report detailing how the Service had implemented the Fire Standards.

Fire Standards were expected to be a feature of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection programme in future years. At the time of the meeting, 11 Standards had been issued, and others were subject to consultation. In total, 23 Standards were expected to be published as a result of HMICFRS recommendations in 2019 to standardise aspects of fire and rescue services' practice. The Standards sought to act as a key component of continuous improvement within the sector and to provide a common standard of service. The Fire Standards Board published a toolkit with each Standard to support their implementation and subsequent reporting. While no compulsory or recommended timescale had been issued for the adoption of the Standards, compliance was expected to be managed through each Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). The Authority delegated responsibility for maintaining compliance with Standards to the relevant directorates.

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

**102/22 REFORMING OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - WHITE PAPER HFA CONSULTATION RESPONSE** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the Authority's response to the Government's consultation on its white paper entitled, Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service.

On 18 May 2022, the Government had published a draft white paper for public consultation, seeking views on a wide range of issues and proposals associated with the reforming of fire and rescue services in England. The Authority had considered its response to the consultation at a Member Day held on 8 July 2022.

**Resolved** - That the Authority's response to the Government's consultation on its white paper entitled, Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service be approved and submitted.

**103/21 REFORMING OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE WHITE PAPER AND CONSULTATION** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report summarising the Government's white paper and consultation in relation to fire and rescue services.

On 18 May, the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Home Secretary) published a white paper and consultation outlining a package of proposed reforms for fire and rescue services. The Government was seeking views on the proposals within the white paper, via formal thematic consultation questions. The consultation exercise would be live for ten-weeks from 18 May 2022 to 26 July 2022 and the questions had been reproduced at Appendix 1 to the report.

**Resolved** - That a draft response to the white paper and consultation be submitted for consideration to the Authority's meeting due to be held on 22 July 2022.

**104/21 HMICFRS UPDATE** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services provided a verbal update on the progress of the HMICFRS inspection report.

The report of HMICFRS's recent inspection of the Service was due to be published on 27 July 2022.

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

**105/21 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services provided a verbal update.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director of Corporate Services offered his thanks to the Service's staff for their diligent work during the recent extreme weather events. On 18 and 19 July 2022 alone, the Service had responded to 640 calls, including 321 fires in the open, 91 secondary fires and 18 primary fires.

**Resolved** - (a) That the update be received;

(b) that the Service's staff be thanked and congratulated for their diligent work under trialling circumstances during the recent extreme weather events, and

(c) that the Authority consider the impact of climate change on fire fighting at a future Member day.