

# HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2022

## PRESENT:

### Members

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

Councillors Abraham, Dennis, Fox, Green, Jefferson and Smith

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

Councillors Belcher, Chambers, Dad, McMurray and Nicola

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

Councillors Lindley, Patrick, Shepherd and Swinburn

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

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

### Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Phil Shillito - Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Matthew Sutcliffe - Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services, Christine Cooper - Executive Director of People and Development, Kevin Wilson - Executive Director of Finance/Section 151 Officer, Steve Duffield - Area Manager Service Improvement, Jon Henderson - Area Manager Prevention and Protection, Dom Purchon - Head of Protection, Lisa Nicholson - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Alison Finn - Committee Manager.

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

**127/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies for absence were submitted from Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Councillors Davison, Neal and West.

**128/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - There were no declarations of interest.

**129/22 MINUTES - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 23 September 2022 be received as a correct record.

**130/22 MINUTES OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - Resolved** - That the minutes of the Appointments Committee meeting held on 30 September 2022 be approved and Matthew Sutcliffe be appointed to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer.

**131/22 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS** - Councillor Shepherd asked when the Fire Station in Grimsby would be refurbished. The Chief Fire Officer explained that the Fire Authority estate was in a sequence of planned maintenance and there was a balance of need across the estate, the station at Grimsby was on the maintenance list.

**132/22 COMMUNICATIONS** - The following communications were reported:

- (i) Members were reminded to return their register of interest forms.

**133/22 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK UPDATE** - The Executive Director of Finance/S151 Officer submitted a report giving a financial outlook update for Members.

The report provided Members with details of the predicted financial outlook of the Authority for the next four years. The current position showed a potentially significant change in the Authority's finances since

the February 2022 Medium Term Resource Strategy because of a number of financial pressures, such as pay awards.

### Financial Pressures

Financial Pressure	Previous Assumption	Current Assumption	Impact (£m)
Pay inflation 2022/23	2.5%	5.0%	3.9
Pay inflation 2023/24	2.0%	3.5%	1.7
New borrowing interest costs	2.5%	4.5%	0.4
Electricity	-25% (Following increase by 55% in 2022/23)	25% increase	0.9
ICT contract inflation	3%	10%	0.4
Other pressures e.g. increased revenue costs as a result of increased capital programme costs due to inflation	n/a	n/a	0.6
<b>Total Pressures</b>			<b>7.9</b>

### Financial Savings/Increased Income

Financial Savings/Income	Impact (£m)
Reduced Rates cost due to revaluation challenge	(0.5)
Increased Council Tax collection fund surplus	(0.3)
Continuation of Services grant for 2023/24 & 2024/25 (reduced for National Insurance saving)	(1.1)
<b>Total Savings/Income</b>	<b>(1.9)</b>
<b>Overall Net Change</b>	<b>6.0</b>

The tables above showed a potential pressure on reserves over the 4 year period of £6.0 million if no other measures or mitigations were introduced. Another key assumption as part of the picture was that the Authority increased the precept by the likely maximum for 2023/24 of 1.99 per cent. That was an additional 15p per Band D property per month.

The Authority had several mitigations available to balance the budget over the medium-term:

- Increased funding from Government for pay awards
- Increased General grant funding from Government
- Efficiencies
- Revenue Contributions to the Capital Programme
- Precept
- Reserves

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

**134/22 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS - PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPTEMBER 2022** - The Executive Director of Finance/S.151 Officer submitted a report that highlighted the current financial position based on information to 30 September 2022.

This was the second set of Management Accounts for the 2022/23 financial year and further updates would be brought to the Authority based on the periods ending 31 December 2022 and 28 February 2023.

CATEGORY	2022/23 OUTTURN PROJECTION
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HFA	
Revenue Budget	£0.196m overspend
Capital Programme	£3.279m spend against £7.292m allocation
Pensions Account	£12.750m deficit

Further details on all the areas were available electronically alongside the agenda papers on the Fire Authority's website at [www.humbersidefire.gov.uk/fire-authority](http://www.humbersidefire.gov.uk/fire-authority).

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

**135/22 UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS** - The Area Manager for Prevention and Protection submitted a report on the reduction in unwanted fire signals.

Members had previously approved the implementation of the Unwanted Fire Signals reduction policy in April 2019. On 1 October 2019, Humberside Fire and Rescue Service introduced a position statement to implement the policy. Overall, the approach had seen a 25 per cent decrease in unwanted fire signal attendances from a baseline year of 2018/19 (1402) to 2021/22 (1045).

In addition, there was a marked increase in the number of prevention and protection activities delivered with the extra capacity introduced from reducing false alarms. In 2018/19, operational crews conducted 6,453 activities in prevention, that had now risen to over 15,000 activities across prevention and protection in 2021/22.

Charging for persistent false alarms had resulted in targeted engagement activities to premises needing support with false alarm management, as well as 2021/22 paid invoices totalling in excess of £52k which had been invested in training across prevention and protection, particularly for operational crews.

Since the go live date, invoices had been issued to all premises that had had four or more unwanted fire signals in a 12 month rolling period in line with the position statement. Since implementation, the paid invoices were as follows:

2019/20 (part and first year)	£3,116.25
2020/21*	£22,678.03
2021/22	£52,841.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£78,635.28</b>

*\*charging suspended April – September 2020*

There was an opportunity to introduce changes to the position statement to further reduce attendances to false alarms, and subsequently further increase the time available for operational crews to proactively engage with businesses and vulnerable people as well as maintain competence for operational preparedness.

Members were asked to note the content and detail of the report on the success so far of the Unwanted Fire Signals policy and subsequent position statement and asked to choose an option from:

- Extend non-attendance to all premises, maintain the current Monday-Friday 0800/1800hrs parameters
- Extend non-attendance to 24hrs every day, maintain the current exemption for sleeping risk premises
- Extend non-attendance to all premises, 24hrs every day.

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

(b) That option b) 'Extend non-attendance to 24 hours every day, maintain the current exemption for sleeping risk premises' be approved, and

(c) That Members receive an update on unwanted fire signals in 6 months' time.

**136/22 FIREFIGHTER PAY AWARD UPDATE** - The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive submitted a report that updated Members on the firefighters pay award.

There were disputed and protracted pay negotiations taking place between the National Joint Council Employers and the Executive Council of the Fire Brigades Union.

To date, two pay award offers had been made by the Employers side of the National Joint Council to the Fire Brigades Union. Those being a 2 per cent increase offered in June 2022 and a revised offer of 5 per cent in October.

The 2 per cent offer was rejected and triggered preparations for the Fire Brigades Union to ballot the membership for strike action, that had not occurred to date. The 5 per cent offer was presented to the Fire Brigade Union Membership by the Executive Council under consultation as to whether, or not, to accept the offer caveated with a strong recommendation to reject. It was understood that planning for a strike ballot continued.

Actions were being taken by the Service to support business continuity in the event of industrial action by members of the Fire Brigade Union, in response to the pay award dispute.

The Chair and Chief Fire Officer would continue to encourage ongoing dialogue between all sides of the National Joint Council in an endeavour to avoid strike action, and to lobby the Home Office for additional funding to provide meaningful support for Fire and Rescue Authorities. Members would be updated with any further developments

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

**137/22 PERFORMANCE REPORTING (APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2022)** - The Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report that provided a bi-annual update on the Service's Performance and Risk.

The table below summarised the Services performance against performance indicators, further detail of which was provided in the report.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	September 2022	Total
SPI - High Severity Dwelling Fires	2	3	6	5	3	-	19
SPI 2.2 - Total Deliberate Fires	31	33	38	62	52	-	216
SPI 2.3 - Accidental Dwelling Fires	30	33	31	32	32	-	158
SPI 2.4 - Deliberate Secondary Fires	367	274	265	399	454	-	1759
SPI 2.5b - False Alarm Non Domestic	67	62	91	114	100	-	434
<b>Total</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2586</b>

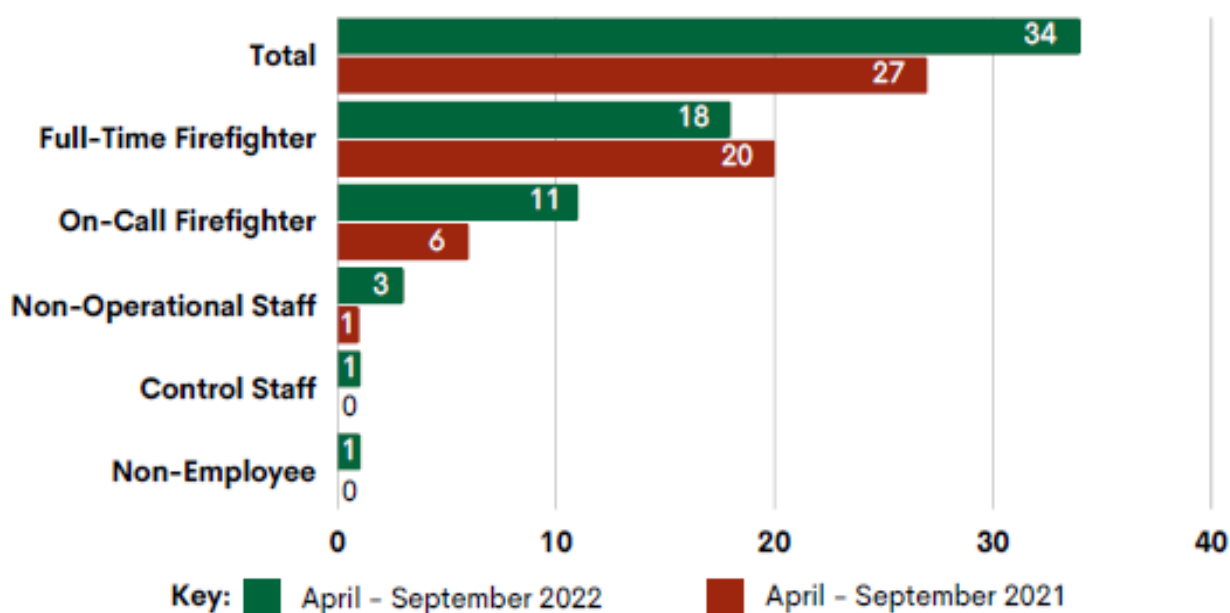
Members took assurance from the Service's proactive approach to performance management and reporting.

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

**138/22 HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT** - The Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report that provided a bi-annual update on the Service's performance on Health, Safety and Environment.

The chart below showed the role of those involved in accidents, for the period (April – Sept 22) alongside a comparison for the same period from the previous year. The total number of reported accidents for the six month period was 26 per cent higher than the previous year. Accidents affecting Full-Time personnel had

reduced by 10 per cent, whilst for On-call personnel there had been an increase of 83 per cent and for Non-Operational staff that had increased from one to three including two minor injuries to cleaners. Those accidents involving Control staff and Non-Employees had both increased from zero to one.



Members took assurance from the Service's proactive approach to performance management and reporting.

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

**139/22 OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE REPORT** - The Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report that provided a bi-annual update on the Service's performance on Operational Assurance.

The table below provided a summary of the statistical data.

Activity Area	April 2022 to September 2022		
	Risk Critical	Cause for Concern	Notable Practice
A - Control	0	0	0
B - Incident Management	0	0	0
C - Firefighting	0	2	16
D - Road Traffic Collision	0	2	2
E - Water Rescue	0	0	1
F - Animal Rescue	0	0	0
G - Hazmat	0	1	3
H - Working at Heights/Rope Rescue	0	6	2
I - Command School	0	0	0
J - Thematic Review	0	0	0
K - Specialist Skill	0	0	1
L - Ops Discretion	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>

Members took assurance from the Service's proactive approach to performance management and reporting.

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

**140/22 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH REPORT** - The Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report that provided a bi-annual update on the Service's performance on Occupational Health.

The table below gave figures for the main Occupational Health activity for the two quarters.

Activity	April to June	July to September
Management referrals	37	45
Self-Referrals	12	4
Discharges	22	76 (data cleansing of old records)
Open Cases	12	25
IHER (Ill Health Early Retirement)	0	1
CISM Defusing/Debriefing (Critical Incident Stress Management)	5	2
Physio Referrals	13	9
Counselling Referrals	4	1
CiC Contacts	22	15
DNA (Did Not Attend)	5	4
Health Surveillance	49	60
Fitness Tests	83 plus 16 Return To Work	507 plus 3 Return To Work

Members took assurance from the Service's proactive approach to performance management and reporting.

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

**141/22 PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT APPOINTMENTS UPDATE - APPOINTMENT OF MAZARS** - The Executive Director of Finance/S151 Officer submitted a report seeking the Authority's approval to accept Mazars as External Auditors for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited had carried out the procurement process on behalf of 99 per cent of Local Authorities, Police and Fire bodies, including this Authority. Following that process, contracts had been offered to six suppliers.

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited proposed that Mazars be appointed to Humberside Fire Authority subject to consultation and agreement by the Authority.

Members voiced their concern regarding the expected significant cost increase which was aimed at resolving some of the fundamental resourcing issues that existed in the Public Sector audit market, that had previously resulted in the very late issuing of Audit Opinions.

**Resolved** - That Mazars be appointed as External Auditors for the Authority for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

**142/22 FIRE SAFETY PROSECUTION** - The Area Manager for Prevention and Protection submitted a report detailing the successful prosecution of TD Polymer Ltd.

In January 2020 Protection officers from the Service issued a Prohibition Notice to Mr Peng Fei Wang to prevent sleeping in a factory premises in Hull. That followed an earlier notice issued in 2019 when the premises traded under a different name.

Following concerns raised by Humberside Police in April 2020, Service officers discovered that Mr Wang was in breach of the issued Prohibition Notice and began an investigation which culminated in Mr Wang being formally charged under Article 32 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Mr Wang appeared at Hull Crown Court on 6 October 2022 and pleaded guilty to breaching both Prohibition Notices served to him in 2019 and 2020. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison (suspended), fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs to HFRS of £21,000.

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

**143/22 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE** - The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive provided a verbal update.

- i. The Chief Fire Officer had written to Chris Philp, the new Minister of State (Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire) and received a reply stating he would like to visit the Service. No date had been arranged yet.
- ii. The Chief Fire Officer had written to other Ministers in October 2022 indicating the pressures that the Service was facing. There had been no responses yet.
- iii. The Chief Fire Officer had written to the ten local MPs indicating the pressures that the Service was facing. There had been no responses yet.
- iv. Pay for green book staff had been agreed and back pay would be paid before Christmas.
- v. The Service had volunteered its Control Room to join the HMICFRS pilot exercise for high rise building evacuation. The staff had been praised for their performance.
- vi. The Service had volunteered to be a pilot for HMICFRS on productivity.
- vii. The High Sheriff of the East Riding of Yorkshire, Jacky Bowes, was experiencing a day's activity at Clough Road Fire Station to gain an understanding of the work undertaken by the Service.
- viii. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Manchester Arena Inquiry Report had been published and the Service was reviewing the recommendations. It was suggested an update be brought to a future Member Day.
- ix. Additional resources had been put in place for Bonfire Night working closely with Humberside Police.

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