

# HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2022

## PRESENT:

### Members

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

Councillors Abraham, Davison, Dennis, Green, Jefferson, Smith and West

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

Councillors Belcher, Chambers, Dad, Neal 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, Niall McKiniry - Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery, 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, Andy Blades - HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead, Lisa Nicholson - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Alison Finn - Committee Manager.

The meeting was held at Service Headquarters, Hessle.

**144/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Apologies for absence were submitted from Jonathan Evison (Police and Crime Commissioner) and Councillors Fox and McMurry.

**145/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - Councillor Abraham declared a non-pecuniary interest insofar as she was a Member of the Police and Crime Panel.

**146/22 MINUTES - Resolved** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 4 November 2022 be received as a correct record.

**147/22 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS** - there were no questions.

**148/22 COMMUNICATIONS** - The following communications were reported:

- (i) Chris Blacksell, former Chief Fire Officer, had sent his thanks through for all his retirement gifts and the kind words from Members.
- (ii) The Service had received a formal letter from the Fire Brigade Union notifying their intention to ballot their Members for strike action, ballot commencing 5 December 2022.
- (iii) The Service acknowledged the Cultural Review Report into the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and were assessing the content, including a task and finish gap analysis of the recommendations made to LFB, against a HFRS self-assessment.
- (iv) Members discussed the need to ensure that there was good Member oversight of the response to the LFB Report and discussions would continue at future Member days.

**149/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT 2022/23** - The Executive Director of Finance/S151 Officer submitted a report that provided an update on the Authority's treasury management activities for the first half of the financial year 2022/23.

## Investment Activity

The Authority's temporary investments totalled £21.0m as at 30 September 2022.

Table 1 - Investment income earned April to September 2022

Interest Earned April to September 2022	Rate of return April to September 2022	Benchmark return at 30 September 2022*	Difference (Favourable) April to September 2022
£43k	0.54%	2.19%	1.65%

\* Benchmark set as 7 day compounded SONIA

The Authority's rate of return had not met the benchmark return provided by Link Asset Services.

The Authority had not taken any short-term borrowing in the first six months of the year. The Authority was unlikely to undertake short-term borrowing in the second half of the financial year.

The Authority's level of borrowing was £19.1m as at 30 September 2022, with an equated average rate of interest payable at 3.40%. An expected £608k of interest was projected to be payable on external debt for 2022/23.

The Authority had not undertaken any new long-term borrowing so far this financial year but that position would be reviewed in the second half of the financial year against the backdrop of interest rate changes and projections. During the period April to September 2022, the Authority operated wholly within the limits approved.

The S.151 Officer considered the current capital programme to be affordable and sustainable with the revenue effects of capital investment built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The application of and regular monitoring thereafter of a prudent Treasury Management Policy and related Prudential Indicators ensured that the Authority effectively managed financial risks such as exposure to interest rate changes, liquidity and market risk whilst minimising borrowing costs and maximising investment income. As an integral part of the financial planning process, it ensured that the financial plans upon which the Authority's Strategic Plan was based were effective and robust.

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

**150/22 DRAFT MEDIUM TERM RESOURCE STRATEGY** - The Executive Director of Finance/S.151 Officer submitted a report that described the financial direction of the Service and outlined its financial pressures.

The Medium Term Resource Strategy provided options for delivering a sustainable budget and capital programme over the medium term. It also set out how the Authority could provide the resources to deliver the priorities in the Community Risk Management Plan within the challenging financial climate.

**Funding Formula** - The Fire and Rescue Service relative needs formula, used to distribute Grant between Fire and Rescue Services, was introduced in 2010/11 and much of the data used had not been updated. There had been recognition for many years that the formula no longer reflected needs, but previous attempts at reform of the relative needs formula in 2018 had not come to fruition due to various technical/political considerations. No change is anticipated to the formula until at least 2024/25 at the earliest and therefore, the Medium Term Resource Strategy made no assumptions in that regard.

**Local Government Finance Settlement and Council Tax Precept** – The Autumn Statement was announced on the 17 November 2022. Following the announcement, amendments to grant and council tax assumptions had been made.

The Medium Term Resource Strategy as presented included an increase in the precept of £2.69 (2.99 per cent) for a Band D property for 2023/24. An increase of 2.99 per cent had also been included for future

years. Final decisions on the actual precept would be made each year by the Authority based on the financial circumstances at the time.

The Authority's budget for 2022/23 was £47.624m. The quarter two revenue monitoring report showed a projected budget overspend of £0.196m as at 30 September 2022.

The forecast closing position on reserves for 2022/23 was £14.077m.

When calculating the medium-term budget projections for Humberside consideration has been given to a number of budget pressures including:

- (i) Pay and price increases;
- (ii) Budget pressures;
- (iii) Revenue implications of the capital programme;
- (iv) Other – including the implications of Covid-19.

Having considered the savings proposals and the availability of reserves to support the MTRS an important consideration was the precept proposal for 2023/24. The Medium Term Resource Strategy included a precept increase of £2.69 (2.99 per cent) built into the funding for 2023/24 and each of the future years.

The overall financial position for Humberside Fire Authority was sustainable over the medium term. However, £0.750m of additional savings were required from 2025/26. Those savings were required in order to minimise the use of reserves to support the day to day costs of the revenue budget over the life of the plan at £3.8m and bring the budget back into balance from 2026/27 onwards. The Authority's overall financial position would be reviewed on an on-going basis.

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

**151/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 ONWARDS – VEHICLES, ESTATES AND ICT** - The Area Manager for Emergency Response and Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report for approval on the proposed capital programme for Vehicles, Estates, and ICT for 2023/24 onwards.

A new Estates Manager had been recruited to oversee the Authority's and Humberside Police joint estate's function and would join the team early in the new year. Both the Authority and Humberside Police had expressed concern over the timescales for delivery of some projects detailed in the current 2023/24 Capital Programme and the associated slippage.

Key areas of focus for the new Estates Manager and the Fire Fleet and Estates Manager would be to review the capacity to deliver the base programme (including slipped works) and review and catch up on condition surveys. Members were asked to consider that, subject to the review, there may be some reprofiling of the programme as part of the outturn report for 2022/23 to be presented to Members at the June meeting. As detailed and approved last year, the block allocation had been uplifted by £50k annually to reflect the increased costs of programme delivery in terms of materials and other supply chain inflation. Further work was underway to determine future years' priorities, including any further works identified by condition reporting.

The proposed Estates programme was therefore:

Scheme	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
<b>Dignity Works</b>				
Crowle	50k			
Withernsea	50k			
<b>Other schemes</b>				
Goole refurbishment	143k			
Bridlington Doors	150k			
Driffild refurbishment	55k			
Electric vehicle charging points	40k	40k	40k	40k

Fire station external works	100k			
<b>Block Allocation</b>		750k	750k	750k
<b>Total</b>	<b>588k</b>	<b>790k</b>	<b>790k</b>	<b>790k</b>

The core ICT Replacement Programme had been brought together with the agile/flexible working programme to ensure that replacement equipment was agile ready. That meant that the maximum use and value could be obtained from all ICT equipment. It should be noted that the move to hosted systems meant that greater pressure was placed on the revenue budget releasing pressure moving forward on the capital budget.

The proposed ICT programme was therefore:

	<b>2023/24 £</b>	<b>2024/25 £</b>	<b>2025/26 £</b>	<b>2026/27 £</b>
Core ICT Replacement Programme	200k	250k	250k	250k
Emergency Services Network (ESN)	100k	100k	100k	100k
Data Centre Hardware Upgrade	150k	150k	100k	100k
Information systems Upgrades and Development	150k	175k	175k	175k
<b>Total</b>	<b>600k</b>	<b>675k</b>	<b>625k</b>	<b>625k</b>

The Authority strove for efficiency and effectiveness by choosing and procuring wherever possible the best available vehicles, equipment, and services, including estates and ICT, ensuring value for money was a priority consideration. The Authority would continue to explore where possible joint procurement opportunities through regional collaborations.

The financial impact of the proposals was detailed in the report. Subject to approval of the recommendations contained within the report, the financial effect of the proposals would be incorporated into the Authority's revenue and capital plans for 2023/24 onwards, that would be presented for consideration and final approval at the Fire Authority in February 2023.

**Resolved** - (i) That the Fire Authority approves the Capital Programme as set out for Vehicles, Estates, and ICT for 2023/24 onwards, and

(ii) That the Capital Programme is incorporated into the Medium-Term Resource Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27 to be considered at the February 2023 meeting of the Fire Authority.

**152/22 ABSENCE MANAGEMENT** - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report that updated Members on absence management for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. In keeping with the Authority's sustained approach, absence remained a key area of focus for the Service.

Table 1 showed the performance during the period against the target, by staff group with 2 staff groups being below target and 2 areas above target.

**Table 1**

	<b>Sum of Days Lost</b>	<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Average Duty Days Lost per person</b>	<b>2022/23 annual target per person</b>	<b>YTD (annual divided by 12 x current month number</b>
Control	228	28.22	8.07	8.70	4.35
Fire Staff	975.34	175.82	5.54	10.00	5

On Call	717.69	344	2.08	7.00	3.5
Full Time	1415.00	430.61	3.28	7.00	3.5
<b>total</b>	<b>3336.03</b>	<b>978.65</b>	<b>3.40</b>		

Table 2 showed that 94.4 per cent of employees during the period had had full attendance.

**Table 2**

	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Target attendance</b>
	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	
Full time	96.61%	97.37%	96.41%	95%
Control	94.84%	97.40%	91.17%	95%
Fire Staff	98.03%	95.86%	95.75%	97%

Table 3 showed the top four reasons for absence for all staff groups during the period and showed that, once again, mental health conditions were the top reason for absence.

**Table 3**

<b>CLG Category</b>	<b>Total duty days lost</b>
Mental Health Anxiety/Depression	878.92
Musculo Skeletal Shoulders	389.00
Musculo Skeletal Back	352.93
Gastro Intestinal	253.68

Table 4 showed that in total there were 412.22 more days absence compared to the same period in 2021/22. However, absence fell significantly during the pandemic period and was now returning to more regular patterns.

**Table 4**

	2022/23 Sum of Duty Days Lost	2021/22 Sum of Duty Days Lost	difference between contract groups 22/23 – 21/22
Control	<b>228</b>	64	<b>+164</b>
Support Staff	<b>975.34</b>	977.01	<b>-1.67</b>
On-Call	<b>717.69</b>	837.80	<b>-120.11</b>
Full-Time	<b>1415</b>	1045	<b>+370</b>
Grand Total	<b>3336.03</b>	2923.81	<b>+412.22</b>

The Fire Authority noted the content of the report and took assurance that absence was being managed fairly, consistently, and appropriately in the Service and necessary follow-up actions were taken to address short and long-term absence issues.

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

**153/22 WORKFORCE PLANNING** - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report that updated Members on the Service Workforce Plan. That Plan had been updated to reflect current staffing levels and the retirement profile. It also reflected how the Service met its obligations under the Community Risk Management Plan and optimised the use of the 24-hour shift system.

A Workforce Planning meeting was held every quarter attended by all Heads of Function to review local planned and unplanned attrition rates and local context and developments. The Tactical Leadership Team met on a monthly basis and, if necessary, was also able to consider workforce planning matters which were occurring dynamically and ensured timely response to addressing shortfalls and redistributing resources, should that be necessary. The Postings and Transfers meeting also met monthly to consider and implement movements around the Service in accordance with service delivery needs.

Progress between 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 included:

- 14 temporary On-Call to Full Time Firefighting contracts issued whilst further permanent recruitment activity took place.
- A further recruitment drive for On-Call Firefighters and transferee Firefighters from other Fire services to join the Full Time establishment.
- 15 new Full Time Probationer Firefighters (externally recruited) included 4 female recruits posted to station in August 2022.
- Ongoing positive action initiatives to collect electronic expressions of interest enabling the Authority to target applications from all under-represented groups.
- Positive action 'roadshows' around Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North-East Lincolnshire Council areas ahead of the latest Full Time Firefighter recruitment drive.
- The launch of a Full Time Firefighter recruitment drive in September 2022, with trainees due to commence in Training School in April 2023 and October 2023.
- The implementation of positive action programmes (Rookie Reds) to equip female applicants to undertake the selection process with more confidence.
- Use of the expressions of interest data to target individuals regarding the option to apply to become an On-Call Firefighter in rural areas where it was more geographically challenging to recruit in accordance with the five-minute response time.

The lack of effective workforce planning could present significant corporate risks if the Authority did not have the right staff in the right place with the right skills at the right time. The development of the Plan presented mitigation to that risk. The Plan would be communicated and explained widely across the workforce and would be published on the Service's website.

Members were assured that the Service regularly reviewed and addressed workforce planning needs through both long-term planning and dynamic response as required.

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

**154/22 HFRS STAFF PAY AWARDS ANNUAL UPDATE** - The Executive Director of People and Development submitted a report that updated Members on the pay position of all the staff groups the Authority employed, including current arrangements and awards made over previous years for comparison. The report also updated on the negotiations around pay that took place annually and the mechanisms that exist for pay negotiations for each staff group.

#### Grey Book

Grey Book staff were those uniformed members of staff in the roles of Firefighter to Area Manager. They were represented at their National Employer NJC by the Fire Brigades Union and Fire Officers Association. For Grey Book staff, detailed discussions on pay had been held over several years and the FBU, who represent most staff in the group, had pushed for a significant pay rise through the Employers' side of the NJC since June 2017. The National Employers decided to make a formal offer on 27 June 2022 of 2 per cent for all Grey Book staff effective from 1 July 2022. The FBU subsequently consulted their members and rejected that offer of a 2 per cent pay increase on 19 July 2022. An improved pay offer was tabled on 4 October 2022 of 5 per cent. The FBU recommended that staff reject the 5 per cent pay offer, and the outcome of a consultative ballot was that the FBU membership had voted to reject the 5 per cent pay offer and would now be balloting for strike action.

#### Green Book

Green Book members of staff were those members of staff who were non-operational. They were represented at their National Employer NJC by UNISON, GMB and UNITE. The NJC consisted of 70 members, 12 from employers' representatives, 31 from UNISON, 16 from GMB and 11 from UNITE. Any

pay increments agreed were due for payment in April annually. Following consultation events, on 25 July 2022 the National Employers made the one year offer of:

- i) An increase of £1925 on all pay points
- ii) With effect from 1 April 2022, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2021 NJC pay agreement circular dated 28 February 2022)
- iii) With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement

An agreement was reached on 1 November 2022 on the pay offer of £1925 on all pay points. Payment was backdated to 1 April 2022 and payment made to employees in the November 2022 salary.

### Gold Book Staff

Gold Book members of staff were those members of staff in the most senior management positions occupying the roles of Brigade Manager or similar. They were represented at their national employer NJC by the Fire Leaders Association. The mechanism for pay negotiation for Gold Book staff involved an annual pay claim which was submitted in September/October annually followed by an offer in response by their NJC employers' side. Any pay increments agreed were due for payment in January annually. In 2022 similarly to in recent years, the decision around an increase had generally not been taken until after the decision had been taken around the Grey Book pay award and the FLA had not made a claim. That had enabled a level of consistency to be applied across the various staff groups for operational staff.

The table below summarised the pay awards for each staff group since 2016.

Staff Group/Pay Award	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Green Book	1%	1%	2%	2%	2.75%	1.75%	£1925
Grey Book	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1.5%	Not agreed
Gold Book	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1.5%	Not agreed

A 1 per cent pay increase across all staff groups equated to a cost to the Service of £366k, assumptions for pay awards were informing the current development of the Medium Term Resource Strategy.

**Resolved** - That the report be received and the Authority note:

- (i) That Grey book staff have not accepted a pay offer of 5% for 2022/23 from the National Employers (NJC);
- (ii) That Green book staff have accepted a pay offer of a flat rate of £1925 for 2022/23 across all pay spines, an increase of 4.04 per cent on all allowances plus an additional day's annual leave with effect from April 2023 from the National Employers (NJC) for Local Government;
- (iii) That Gold book staff have not received a pay offer, and this will likely be determined by the outcome of the Grey book pay offer.

### **155/22 STRATEGIC PLAN AND COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) 2021-24 REFRESH**

- The Area Manager for Service Improvement submitted a report that described the detailed risks that were prevalent in the community, alongside the methods and resources that could be applied to mitigate those risks.

The Community Risk Management Plan was produced in accordance with section 4.6 of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England with the responsibility for each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan.

The Community Risk Management Plan described in detail the risks that were prevalent in the community, alongside the methods and resources applied to mitigate those risks, with the Strategic Plan providing the focus for effectively and efficiently delivering services.

Members received an annual update regarding any amendments made to the Strategic Plan and Community Risk Management Plan each December, throughout the life of the plans. The report informed Members of relevant updates made during the second year of the 2021-24 plans and any potentially significant factors, that might impact future delivery of the plans. Where significant changes had been made, or were being considered, it was also appropriate to consult with staff and the community

The annual process of reporting relevant changes provided an assurance to Members that compliance with the National Framework was regularly reviewed.

**Resolved -**

- (i) That Members take assurance from the process used to review and update the CRMP; and
- (ii) That the Authority approves a 12-week period of consultation, commencing in early 2023.

**156/22 HMICFRS UPDATE** – The Assistant Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services gave a verbal update to the Authority.

Smaller tranches of Fire and Rescue Services would be formed in order to speed up the process for reports to be provided by the Inspectorate. There was a potential for the Service to be in tranche three as they were 27 on the list. The Service was striving to be assessed as Outstanding and would work hard to achieve that.

The Service had supported HMICFRS in their preparations for the next round of inspections by participating in pilot inspections of high rise building incidents and a productivity and efficiency exercise. Members were reminded that the CFO is the national NFCC lead for that workstream.

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

**157/22 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE** - The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive provided a verbal update.

- i. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported on a fire fatality that had occurred the previous week.
- ii. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that a potential arson case was under investigation jointly between the Service and Humberside Police.
- iii. Positive comments had been received from the ongoing lobbying of M.Ps and the Chief Fire Officer had meetings arranged with Graham Stuart M.P and Martin Vickers M.P.
- iv. The Chief Fire Officer had sent a further letter to all local M.Ps to lobby for a potential £5 increase to the Council Tax precept.
- v. An FBU Red Plaque, commemorating the tragic death of firefighter Anthony Jackson during a training exercise in 1974, had been unveiled at Goole Fire Station.
- vi. The Service supported the launch of the White Ribbon Scouts Badge. A fire engine wrapped in the White Ribbon graphics attended at the White Ribbon Badge launch by Jacky Bowes, the High Sheriff of the East Riding of Yorkshire.
- vii. Planning for potential Industrial Action was underway.
- viii. The Chief Fire Officer thanked Members for their support and challenge during the year and wished them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

**158/22 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 paragraphs 3 & 4 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.

**159/22 INDUSTRIAL ACTION PLANNING UPDATE** - The Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery submitted a report updating Members on the Services Industrial Action planning arrangements identifying statutory responsibilities, approximate timelines, progress, costs, and an overview of the Contingency Fire / Control Crew Capability.

**Resolved –**

- (i) That the update be received and further detail be provided to the Authority in due course.
- (ii) That Members take assurance that plans are in place to ensure that the Authority continues to meet its Statutory functions and maintains an emergency response to the local community;  
and
- (iii) That Members acknowledge the response to the Home Office offer in respect of Military support.