

**HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**22 FEBRUARY 2021**

**PRESENT:** Independent Co-opted Members Mr D Chapman (Chairperson), Mr M Allingham, Mr J Doyle, Mrs P Jackson, Mr A Smith, Mrs M Thomlinson and Mr C Vertigans.

Councillors Briggs, Davison and Green attended as observers.

Phil Shillito - Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director Service Delivery, Paul McCourt - Director of Service Delivery, Niall McKiniry - Director of Service Improvement, Steve Topham - Director of Service Support, Simon Rhodes - Head of Corporate Assurance, Martyn Ransom - Head of Finance, Jason Kirby - Temporary Head of People and Development, Mathew Buckley - Monitoring Officer/Secretary, Samm Campbell - Committee Manager, Andy McCulloch - Internal Audit (TIAA) and Ross Woodley - External Audit (Mazars) were also present.

The meeting was held remotely via video-conference (Zoom). The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m.

**PROCEDURAL**

**16/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - There were no apologies for absence.

**17/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - There were no declarations of interest.

**18/21 MINUTES - *Resolved*** - That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

**19/21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES, OTHER THAN ON THE AGENDA** - There were no matters arising.

**GOVERNANCE**

**20/21 UPDATE: MATTERS ARISING/FEEDBACK FROM FIRE AUTHORITY** - The Monitoring Officer/Secretary provided feedback on items considered by the Fire Authority at its meetings of 12 February 2021.

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

**Audit**

**21/21 DRAFT EXTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM 2020/21** - Ross Woodley (Mazars) submitted the draft External Audit Strategy Memorandum for 2020/21.

The presentation of the Strategy was similar to those of previous years but, as a result of the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the timelines would run a month later than usual. Mazars and the Service were working to a deadline of 30 September 2021 for the completion of the external audit process. The Service's accounts were due to be finalised by June 2021, after which the audit would be undertaken. As in previous years, property, plant and equipment, and changes to pension schemes would remain significant areas of priority.

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

**22/21 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - HEALTH AND SAFETY** - Andy McCulloch (TIAA) submitted a report of an audit of health and safety.

The report had been circulated following the Sub-Committee's meeting held on 25 January 2021. The audit had been undertaken by a qualified health and safety professional and concluded with three 'Important' recommendations and one 'Routine' recommendation. A Member queried TIAA's findings in relation to the "no blame" culture. The audit had concluded that a disproportionate "no blame" culture would have a negative impact on accountability and it had been recommended that the Service ensure that "no blame" culture, which would foster good rates of health and safety reporting, was balanced with a culture of personal responsibility for health and safety.

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

**23/21 DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021/22** - Andy McCulloch (TIAA) submitted the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22.

The 2020/21 internal audit process was due to conclude by 31 March 2021. Two audit activities were yet to be undertaken and some additional days, which had not been used during 2020/21 as a result of the pandemic, would be carried over for use in 2021/22. Cybercrime continued to be a significant issue for all of TIAA's internal audit clients and would be addressed in the 2021/22 Plan. The draft Plan provided details of the 13 audit activities due to be undertaken in 2021/22 as well as indicative plans for the following two years.

A Member queried Appendix D to the draft Internal Audit Plan, the Internal Audit Charter, and asked that, if it was necessary for the Committee or Fire Authority to approve it, that it be considered as a separate item.

A Member noted that TIAA intended to undertake an audit of equality, diversity and inclusion at the Service. The Committee agreed that its scrutiny of diversity and recruitment (due to be considered at the meeting to be held on 12 April 2021) should be taken into consideration during the audit process.

**Resolved** - (a) That the draft Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 be received, and

(b) that the Committee's scrutiny of diversity and recruitment (due to be considered at the meeting to be held on 12 April 2021) be taken into consideration during TIAA's audit of equality, diversity and inclusion as part of its Internal Audit Plan 2021/22.

## **PERFORMANCE, RISK AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT**

**24/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS, TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22 AND MINIMUM REVENUE POSITION 2021/22** - The Head of Finance submitted a report summarising the Treasury Management and Capital Expenditure Prudential Indicators, Treasury Management Policy Statement 2021/22, and Minimum Revenue Provision 2021/22.

This report was the first of three received by the Committee during each year in relation to treasury management. The Service expected to spend £3.4m on capital schemes, which was a typical amount for a year without a significant building project. However, this figure also included capital projects which had slipped from the 2020/21 financial year as a result of Covid-19, including the replacement of firefighters' personal protective equipment.

The Service's borrowing as a percentage of revenue remained within its financial means and its debts remained affordable. The Committee was due to receive treasury management training on 23 April 2021 at 10:30am.

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

**25/21 HMICFRS INSPECTION UPDATE** - The Director of Service Improvement provided the Committee with a verbal update in relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service's (HMICFRS).

The national thematic report focussed on Covid-19 and the reports resulting from its individual inspections of each fire and rescue service had been published by HMICFRS on 22 January 2021. Since the Committee's previous meeting, HMICFRS had published a report on the progress made by London Fire Brigade in relation to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase One Recommendations. The Inspectorate's annual State of Fire and Rescue report was expected to be published in March 2021. However, the six recommendations made within the Inspectorate's State of Fire and Rescue report, published in 2019, had not yet been addressed by the Government.

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

### **SCRUTINY PROGRAMME**

**26/21 GAS COMMITTEE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2020/21** - The Committee Manager submitted a report summarising the Committee's Scrutiny Programme 2020/21.

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

(b) that a workshop be held in April 2021 to consider items for the 2021/22 Scrutiny Programme.

**27/21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP** - Mr M Allingham and Mr C Vertigans' terms of office were due to expire on 31 March 2021, making the current meeting their final one as Members of the Committee. Councillor Briggs, Chair of the Fire Authority, and Mr D Chapman, Chair of the Committee, registered their thanks for Mr M Allingham and Mr C Vertigans' valuable and effective contributions to the Service spanning more than eight years. In particular, Mr D Chapman added his thanks for their support of him as Chair of the Committee and their diligence during periods of change for the Committee. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Director of Service Improvement added their thanks to Mr M Allingham and Mr C Vertigans' on behalf of all officers.