

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

**1 DECEMBER 2022**

**PRESENT:** Independent Co-opted Members James Doyle (Chair) Chris Brown, Kathryn Lavery, and Gerry Wareham.

Niall McKiniry – Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery, Matthew Sutcliffe – Assistance Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Corporate Services, Christine Cooper – Executive Director of People and Development, Jon Henderson – Director of Prevention and Protection, Steve Duffield – Area Manager Service Improvement, Martyn Ransom – Joint Deputy Chief Finance Officer & Deputy S.151 Officer, Lisa Nicholson – Monitoring Officer/Secretary, and Rob Close – Committee Manager were also present. Andrew McCulloch – Director of Internal Audit (TiAA).

Councillor Briggs was also present.

The meeting was held at the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Kingston upon Hull. The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m.

**PROCEDURAL**

**70/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Apologies for absence were received from Pam Jackson.

**71/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Kathryn Lavery declared that she was no longer Chair of Yorkshire Ambulance NHS Trust but had taken up the role of Chair of Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust.

**73/22 MINUTES – *Resolved*** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

**74/22 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES, OTHER THAN ON THE AGENDA** – There were no matters arising.

**GOVERNANCE**

**75/22 UPDATE: MATTERS ARISING/FEEDBACK FROM FIRE AUTHORITY** – The Monitoring Officer/Secretary provided feedback on items considered by the Fire Authority at its meetings on 4 November 2022.

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

**AUDIT**

**76/22 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS** – The Committee received a report of the internal auditors, TiAA. The Committee was advised that progress towards completion of the mid-year audit review highlighted that the outstanding recommendations were a consequence of technical complications arising from a IT security breach. All recommendations were on track for implementation against the agreed dates.

It was clarified to the Committee that Firewatch was a data management system used across the industry. Currently, Firewatch was used parallel to a legacy system. However, development towards full integration was progressed by an in-house project team, including both Human Resources (HR) and IT colleagues. The team intended to seek the advice of partner authorities, attend a professional conference in January before mapping out a gantt chart to full integration. The move to a one system approach was evaluated each stage at by senior officers.

**Resolved** - That the report be received

## **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE**

**77/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT 2022/23** – The Joint Deputy Chief Finance Officer updated the Committee on the treasury management activities for the first half of the financial year 2022/23. the Authority operated within the Prudential limits approved by Humberside Fire Authority. Borrowing during the year had not exceeded the operational boundary at any point and was not expected to over the course of the next period.

As a result of market fluctuation, a notable level of capital programme slippage occurred during the last financial year, generally extending to premise refurbishments. While no acute issues were immediately present, the dignity at work of staff was an integral consideration and captured on the risk register. Moving forward, collaboration with Humberside Police sought to increase the viability and efficiency of refurbishment. Dedicated positions were created in both organisations and both organisations intended to work closely to maximise delivery.

It was clarified that the capital programme was financed through borrowing rather than capital grants which enabled greater flexibility to defer programme activities until preferred times. A full review of the capital programme revealed a significant increase in actual expenditure when compared to initial predictions. Ultimately, the capital programme was to be considered at HFA.

**Resolved** - That the report be received

**78/22 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – PERIOD ENDING 30 SEPT 2022** – The Joint Deputy Chief Finance Officer submitted a report summarising management accounts for the period ending 30 September 2022. Currently, the outturn position indicated a nominal overspend. Additionally, Members were advised that, despite a further 20 per cent for utilities costs allocation, an additional £200,000 was earmarked for the remainder for 2022/23.

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

## **SCRUTINY PROGRAMME**

**79/22 SCRUTINY ITEM - PROCUREMENT** – The Joint Deputy Chief Finance Officer submitted a report summarising the Authority's procurement position. The procurement process for the Authority was informed by public procurement legislation, the Constitution of the Authority, and common financial procedures. This resulted in a procurement policy that sought to ensure compliance, ethics and value for money. To obtain best value through competitive processes, the Authority set out financial thresholds for the award of contracts laid out through a compliant and proportion process. It was expected that value for money exercises may have avoided up to £1.1million in additional costs. Published tenders valued in excess of £50,000 were to be accompanied by bidders' declaration of interest extending to a

wide range of criteria. The Authority contributed to the National Fraud Initiative which sought to increase the detection of fraud attempts.

Capital projects, managed mainly by the Joint Estates Function with Humberside Police, were given a 10 per cent weighting to social value within the evaluation criteria for awarding the contract. All tenders in excess of £50,000 included environmental considerations as part of the formal evaluation criteria. Regional and national partners were considered when procuring equipment and vehicles as to take advantage of any opportunities for economies of scale and ensure optimal use of resources.

Members raised the following points:

- Engagement with CIPS – The Committee endorsed the engagement with CIPS (Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply) as a professional body. They were advised that a number of members of staff were closely associated with CIPS with one member of staff studying level six.
- Bid Integrity – A range of sources were utilised to examine the integrity of tenders including credit reference agencies and Companies House. Generally, to effectively cross examine tenders, an accurate return on criteria was required from respondents. The Authority's Constitution and the Procurement Policy were considered robust enough to mitigate duplicitous tenders. Dishonesty regarding the arrangements in place for tender respondents would result in them falling out of compliance with their contract.
- Environmental Considerations – While environmental factors were a consideration for all tenders, those considerations only formed part of formal award evaluation criteria when the anticipated value exceeded £50,000.
- Social Value Criteria – The assessment of social value criteria was considered to be successful, that was not however reflected by a long-term assessment of its impact to the community. Generally, the impact of social value was not believed to be recorded throughout the public sector. The social value weighting of 10 per cent of the overall award criteria was the mandatory minimum for overall marks required. A range of questions were asked to statutory directors to satisfy the social demand requirements. Manufacturing arrangements were naturally more difficult to assess as this often occurred overseas

**Resolved -** That the Committee take assurance in the procurement process for Humberside Fire Authority.

**80/22 GAS COMMITTEE SCRUTINY PROGRAMME 2022/23** – The Committee Manager submitted a report summarising the Committee's Scrutiny Programme 2022/23.

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

**81/22 ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – The Deputy Chief Fire Officer & Executive Director of Service Delivery, and Area Manager Service Improvement advised of challenges facing the Authority in its immediate future including advice that the HMICFRS round three was to commence in January 2023 with a new grading between Good and Requires Improvement. The Authority sat in the third tranche and would likely be assessed towards the end of 2023.

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