

AT A MEETING of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority
held at Fire & Police HQ, Eastleigh on Tuesday, 10th October, 2023

Chairman:

* Councillor Rhydian Vaughan MBE

* Councillor Zoe Huggins
* Councillor Fran Carpenter
* Councillor David Drew
* Councillor Sally Goodfellow
Councillor David Harrison

* Councillor Karen Lucioni
* Councillor Hugh Lumby
Councillor George Madgwick
* Councillor Derek Mellor
* Councillor Roger Price

* Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman: Cllr Nick Chard, Chairman of Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority and Officers from Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

199. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors George Madgwick and David Harrison. Donna Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire also sent her apologies.

200. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful to disclose to the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they may have in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, along with any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that Members wished to disclose.

201. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 25 JULY 2023

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

202. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

203. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

After welcoming observers to the meeting, the Chairman shared that five specialist search and rescue firefighters had been deployed to Morocco as part of the UK International Search and Rescue (ISAR) team providing specialist help following the devastating earthquake. While in Morocco, the UK ISAR team received a letter from Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, thanking them for their assistance with the operation.

On the 4 October, a LIVEX 2023 exercise had taken place, arranged by the

Local Resilience Forum. It included setting up a Strategic Coordinating Centre at Headquarters and two tactical centres, one on the mainland and one on the Isle of Wight and the purpose was to rehearse multi-agency tactical and strategic response, and how partner agencies reacted to information as if it was a real event.

The Chairman confirmed that new live fire facilities were in place, which provided realistic burning and multi floor and scenario-based training to further support operational teams in their development. The first students were expected to utilise it in the middle of October.

Finally, the Chairman shared the sad passing of Geoff Hockley, who served on the Fire Authority between June 2019 and May 2021. Condolences were sent to Geoff's friends and family on behalf the Fire Authority.

204. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENTS**

Members of the Authority provided the following updates:

- The Chairman, Councillor Rhydian Vaughan had attended:
 - 26 July - Prince's Trust events on the Isle of Wight and Basingstoke.
 - 8 September – The unveiling of a commemorative plaque in honour of firefighters Alan Bannon and James Shears, who died in the line of duty at the Shirley Towers fire in 2010.
 - 9 September – Basingstoke Fire Station open day
 - 27 September – Fire Commission meeting
- Vice Chairman Zoe Huggins had welcomed an increase in Prince's Trust and Cadet programme attendance and welcomed any questions from Members of the Authority on the schools education programme ahead of a meeting on the 18 November.
- Councillor Roger Price had attended:
 - 7 September – Local Government Association (LGA) conference
 - 8 September – Prince's Trust event in Sandown on the Isle of Wight
 - 14 September – Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) Pension meeting
 - 19 September – SAB Pension conference
 - 27 September – Fire Commission meeting
 - 6 October – Fire Service Management Committee meeting.
- Councillor Sally Goodfellow had attended the Southampton Pride event on 6 August and thanked White Watch crew at Shirley Warren for their assistance in filling a pop-up swimming pool at Shirley Warren Primary school. Councillor Goodfellow expressed her disappointment at not being able to attend the commemorative event or the Redbridge Prince's Trust celebration due to a diary clash. A colleague from Southampton City Council was able to attend the Prince's Trust event on her behalf.
- Councillor Karen Lucioni had attended media training at HIWFRS as well as the Prince's Trust event with Councillor Price on the 8 September. Several of the fire stations on the Isle of Wight had also been visited to see the upgrades that had taken place.
- Councillor Fran Carpenter thanked HIWFRS firefighters for their assistance at a house fire close to where she lived.

- Councillor Hugh Lumby thanked officers for organising the Bishops Waltham Fire Station visit as well as the Service at Droxford Fire Station for their quick response to a local incident.
- Councillor Derek Mellor had attended a Rushmoor Cadets event and informed Members of training coming up for the Standards and Governance Committee on pensions.
- Councillor George Madgwick provided an update via Councillor Price confirming that he had attended three Fire Station open days over the past few months as well as a '999' day at Port Solent.

205. Q1 BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Full Authority considered a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 7 in the minute book), which set out the quarter one forecast position for the Authority and provided financial updates following the Budget Report from February 2023.

The officer summarised the report, highlighting that it was the second year of a two year efficiency plan which would deliver £1.3m in order to balance the budget. The bulk of the savings had been delivered by the removal of a senior management post, property related savings, additional income and focused management of resources within the Operations Directorate.

During questions on the report, Members learned the following:

- There were still some difficulties sourcing on-call firefighters during the day but there were plans in place to improve availability.
- The audits had been signed by the Authority in draft form, but were currently unaudited externally due to the national delays

Members were pleased to hear that there had been a recent successful recruitment of new firefighters and an induction process had been put in place.

It was noted that there was some minor tweaks required to the forecast numbers in paragraph 8 of the report, but the overall totals were correct. The correct table is as follows:

Table 2	Budget	Forecast	Over / (under) spend
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Wholetime Firefighters	40,427	40,196	(231)
On-call Firefighters	9,011	7,309	(1,702)
Staff	16,448	16,866	418
Other Employee Costs	2,147	2,147	0
Premises	8,003	7,918	(85)
Transport	1,779	1,887	108
Supplies and Services	9,444	9,708	264
Third Party Payments	2,619	2,799	180
Income	(3,352)	(3,167)	185
Net Service Expenditure	86,526	85,663	(863)
Contingency	500	500	0

Capital financing	1,029	1,029	0
Net Expenditure	88,055	87,192	(863)
Funding	(88,055)	(88,081)	(26)
Net Position	0	(889)	(889)

RESOLVED

a) The forecast outturn position for financial year 2022/23 was noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority, including the minor updates to the table in paragraph 8 of the report as above.

b) The updated capital programme forecasts (appendices A1 and A2) were noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

c) The quarterly prudential indicators (appendix B) were noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

d) The quarterly treasury management update report including the treasury management indicators (appendix C) were noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

e) The sale of pooled fund investments (paragraph 32) were noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

206. FUNDING FOR IN-HOUSE HR TEAM

The Full Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 8 in the minute book), which outlined the options for establishing an in-house Human Resources (HR) team following a review of the Shared Services Partnership (SSP) undertaken in 2022.

The report was summarised and it was highlighted that a modern casework system would assist in addressing the theme of misconduct highlighted in the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report.

During questions on the report and proposals, Members learned the following:

- Staff would be upskilled and trained to assist with pensions, but this area would still largely fall under finance and therefore was not significantly affected by the HR proposals
- The proposals could be assessed by Authority once implemented and embedded to assess how the arrangements were working.

- There was a commitment to reduce the potential for redundancies and posts would be ring-fenced in the new embedded teams for them to transfer to.
- HR was a vital practice and work forces were more complex diverse, making it more important to be considered fully.
- The proposals were subject to funding and so agreement was only being sought in principal. More details would become available closer to the budget-setting process.

During discussion, it was agreed that it would be helpful to know more about how the pensions service would operate going forward and any impacts of the proposals. The Chief Finance Officers assured Members that there would be minimal impact as this would still largely fall within finance, but more information could be provided if desired. This was welcomed by Members.

RESOLVED

a) Option 3 (outlined in paragraph 24) and the required funding was approved by the Fire Authority (subject to affordability).

b) Funding for one-off redundancy costs estimated to be between £0-250k, was approved by the Fire Authority.

c) Ongoing funding for the HR casework system of £18k per annum was approved by the Fire Authority.

d) It was agreed that a paper come to a future Authority meeting for information, that explained any impacts on the Pensions Service and how this would work from April 2024 onwards.

207. **SAFETY PLAN 2025-30: APPROVAL OF STAGE 1 REPORT AND AGREEMENT TO STAGE 2**

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 9 in the minute book) on findings of what reasonably foreseeable fire and rescue related risks could be faced in the community as part of the completed Stage 1 and plans going forward for Stage 2.

The officer summarised the report, confirming that a peer assessment had been done with Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, which had been very beneficial.

Members welcomed the report and praised officers for the work undertaken.

RESOLVED

a) The continuing approach to produce the Fire Authority's next Safety Plan was noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

b) The Stage 1 report (at Appendix A) capturing foreseeable fire and rescue related risk was approved by the HIWFRA Full Authority for publication on the HIWFRS's website.

208. MINUTES FROM THE STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 24 JULY 2023

The minutes of the Standard and Governance Committee were received by the Authority.

209. MANAGING FIRE CONTAMINANTS

The Authority considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 11 in the minute book), which updated the Fire Authority on the work, action taken to date and continued action required to further mitigate and manage the complex impacts of fire contaminants.

The officer summarised the report, highlighting that managing contaminants was a national issue for the sector with additional complexities around ways of working.

During questions on the report, the following was confirmed to Members:

- Domestic fires generally contained more plastics and dangerous substances but toxins and gases were monitored.
- Fire retardent could be dangerous and so feedback was regularly given to the Fire Executive to consider its use.
- It was accepted that it could be more challenging to change the habits of longer serving fire fighters and would require a general shift in culture and ways of working
- It was accepted that it would be an expensive process to upgrade buildings and equipment and a letter had been sent to central government asking for funding.

RESOLVED

a) £1.3m funding was approved for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget subject to affordability by the HIWFRA Full Authority to implement 2024/25 improvements.

b) The creation of two new establishment posts, to manage the equipment implications and to continue research and development, and their associated revenue budget were approved for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget subject to affordability by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

c) The ambition to utilise the new capacity within research and development to lead and influence, including via the National Fire Chiefs Council and wider fire sector was noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

d) It was noted that the funding for equipment and PPE considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan would be reported to the Authority in February 2024.

e) The need for future investment for On Call fire stations, subject to a further report being presented for consideration, was noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

f) The need for future investment in the management and decontamination of vehicles, subject to a further report being presented for consideration, was noted by the HIWFRA Full Authority.

210. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There was no requirement to exclude the press and public from the meeting and therefore this resolution was not required.

211. Q1 BUDGET UPDATE REPORT - EXEMPT APPENDIX

This exempt appendix was considered as part of the main report at agenda item 7 (minute 205).

212. MANAGING FIRE CONTAMINANTS - EXEMPT APPENDIX

This appendix was considered along with the main report at item 11 (minute 209).

213. EXEMPT MINUTE FROM FULL AUTHORITY - 25 JULY 2023

The exempt minute was approved.

214. EXEMPT MINUTE FROM FULL AUTHORITY - 25 JULY 2023 - MEMBERS ONLY

The exempt minute was approved.

Chairman,