

AT A MEETING of the HFRA Standards and Governance Committee held
virtually via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 24th February, 2021

Chairman:

* Councillor Liz Fairhurst

Vice-Chairman

* Councillor Sharon Mintoff

* Councillor Jonathan Glen

* Councillor Geoffrey Hockley

* Councillor Roger Price

*Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:
Councillor Chris Carter, Chairman of HFRA

132. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present, and no apologies were noted.

133. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other personal interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

No interests were declared.

134. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 17 November 2020 were reviewed and agreed.

135. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

136. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements to make, but welcomed Councillor Chris Carter, Chairman of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority, to the meeting.

137. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2020/21

The Committee received a regular report of the Chief Internal Auditor on the Internal Audit Progress Report 2020/21 (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced, and it was heard that good progress had been made, and with the exception of the final piece of follow-up work, all work had been scoped and started. It was expected that all work would be completed in time for the annual audit opinion. Members heard that the number of outstanding and overdue actions continued to reduce, and further detail on these would be presented in a report later on in the agenda.

Members thanked the team for all their hard work, and in response to a Member question it was confirmed that completion of work was subject to officers remaining fit and well, but signs remained positive, and it was fully expected that work would be completed in time for the annual audit opinion.

RESOLVED:

That the progress in delivering the internal audit plan for 2020/21 and the outcomes to date is noted by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority Standards and Governance Committee.

138. INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Chief Fire Officer on the progress of Internal Audit Management Actions (Item 7 in the Minute Book). The report was introduced, and Members heard that since publication of the report, the outstanding management action in relation to procurement processes and the Sharepoint site had been completed and closed. Attention was drawn to paragraph 7 of the report which highlighted the reduction in outstanding management actions from 15 to 8. It was explained that those outstanding actions in relation to the new Combined Fire Authority (CFA) were on track for completion, and revised dates in relation to these actions were contingent on preparatory work for the new CFA.

In response to a Member question, the significant work in relation to the formation of the new CFA was highlighted and it was heard that in her new role, the newly appointed Deputy Chief Fire Officer would have oversight of outstanding CFA management actions over the next few months.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards and Governance Committee notes that, despite the impact of COVID-19, significant progress continues to be made towards the implementation of the internal audit management actions.

139. ORGANISATIONAL RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Chief Fire Officer providing an update on the Organisational Risk Register (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced, and it was explained that this would be a regular report for the Committee to keep Members sighted on organisational risks. It was heard that with the implementation of the risk management framework within the Service, there were two additional risk areas that had been added to the Risk Register. Members attention was drawn to paragraphs 5 and 6 of the cover report which detailed the two additional risk areas: data quality issues and the McCloud pension remedy. In relation to data quality issues, Members heard that there were a number of different activities taking place across the service to ensure the improvement of data quality, and there had been an increased focus on this across the Service. It was explained that in the future, this risk area could be taken off the Risk Register as the Service works more holistically to address this issue.

In relation to the McCloud pension remedy, Members heard that the Government have chosen the deferred choice as a result of their recent consultation, and further details of the implications of this were explained to Members. It was heard that the low score for this risk area on the Risk Register was due to a team already being in place to deal with the impacts of the remedy.

Officers explained the background to the high risk scores and red arrows on the Risk Register (page 41 of the agenda pack). It was noted that once there was more certainty around high risks such as future financial planning uncertainty, then planning assumptions can be put into action. Members heard that with the absence of a multi-year spending review from Government, the risk score for future financial planning uncertainty had been increased on the Risk Register.

In response to a Member question on the risk area of Covid-19 related wellbeing and safety (page 41 of the agenda pack), it was explained that there should be three horizontal arrows on the chart for this issue and this would be updated. In terms of this as an ongoing risk for the Service, it was heard that there was no significant change, but with the roll-out of the vaccination programme and testing, there had been a reduction in employee sickness and work was continuing with Occupational Health colleagues to ensure all employees who have had Covid were supported.

RESOLVED:

That Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority Standards and Governance Committee notes the Organisational Risk Register status under the delegated management of the Chief Fire Officer.

140. INDEPENDENT PERSON TO HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

The Committee received a report of The Clerk on the Independent Person to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (Item 9 in the Minute Book). The report was introduced, and Members of the Committee heard that a

recruitment process had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee. Two applications for the position of Independent Person were received, and in light of both candidates considerable experience and for greater resilience, members of the recruitment working group agreed that both candidates should be recommended to the Authority for appointment.

Members also noted the information in the exempt appendix under Item 11 on the agenda when making their decision, and agreed that it was not necessary to go into exempt session to discuss the exempt information.

RESOLVED:

That the Standards and Governance Committee RECOMMEND to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority at its AGM in June 2021, the appointment of two Independent Persons, recommended by the working group and as detailed in the Exempt Appendix, for a four-year term with an allowance of £100 per annum each.

141. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that it was not necessary to go into exempt session. Please see Minute No 140 above.

142. INDEPENDENT PERSON TO HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY (EXEMPT APPENDIX)

It was agreed that it was not necessary to go into exempt session. Please see Minute No 140 above.

Chairman,