

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee held at Fire and Police Headquarters, Eastleigh on Wednesday, 28th September, 2022

Chairman:

* Councillor Derek Mellor

* Councillor David Harrison

* Councillor Zoe Huggins

* Councillor Gary Hughes

Councillor Debbie Curnow-Ford

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Corkery.

55. 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.

56. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 29 July 2022 were reviewed and agreed.

In response to a Member's question, the Chief Financial Officer explained the new risks which had been added to the Organisational Risk Register in relation to the cost of living (minute 48) were those relating to the impact on staff and the risks of changing behaviour of the public and its impact in terms of the incidents of fire.

The officer also confirmed that the work to write off the underpaid pension contributions relating to the specific historical pension contribution rate issue (minute 49) was underway.

57. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

58. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no formal announcements.

59. EXTERNAL AUDIT RESULTS 2021/22

The Chief Financial Officer introduced her report (item number 6 in the minute book) on the External Auditor's Audit Results report and explained that, although it had been hoped that the work to complete the audit of the Authority's financial statements, there were some outstanding matters related to property valuations and that she wished to defer the item until after the audit work was complete at the Committee's meeting in November.

The External Auditor assured the Committee that there would be no problem with completing the work required to sign off the accounts and meet the statutory deadline of 30 November 2022. He confirmed that the property valuation issue was resolvable and related to two buildings on one site.

The External Auditor gave an update on the audit work:

- Testing had been carried out on the brought forward balances from the Isle of Wight into the new Combined Authority with nothing to report. (page 24 of the report pack)
- Testing had been completed on misstatements due to fraud or error with nothing to report. (page 25 of the report pack)
- The Auditors were awaiting a response from the Pension Fund Auditors This was likely to be resolved soon and that there was nothing to report. (page 26 of the report pack).

The Committee thanked the Chief Financial Officer for her contribution and noted the smooth merger with the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED

The HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee noted that the External Audit Results 2021/22 report would be presented at its meeting on 28 November 2022.

60. **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22**

The Chief Financial Officer explained that as discussed during the previous item (item number 59 of these minutes), she was not asking the Committee to approve the accounts (item number 7 in the minute book) and that they would be presented at its November meeting. She explained that she did not want to risk having to make an adjustment to the accounts, if required by the Audit, which could potentially be for a value above her delegated authority.

Cllr Harrison proposed an amendment to the recommendation to defer the approval of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 until the meeting of the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee on 28 November 2022.

Cllr Huggins seconded this amendment.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed that the approval of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 would be deferred until the meeting of the Standards and Governance Committee on 28 November 2022.

61. **FIRE STANDARDS PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Fire Officer (item number 8 in the minute book). The Head of Performance introduced the report which was to

provide awareness of the National Fire Standards and the latest update on the Service's alignment against the published Standards.

The following points were clarified to the Committee:

- A gap analysis was carried out for each Fire Standard when it was published, which identified actions required, including larger resource intensive pieces of work.
- To identify and adopt best practice, the team were involved in focus groups, used various IT tools and examined inspection reports.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that other Fire and Rescue Services had contacted HIWFRS as a leader in terms of how it was managing its approach.

RESOLVED

The HIWFRA Standards and Committee noted the progress made towards compliance of HIWFRS with the Fire Standards.

The HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee noted that future funding would be required to ensure compliance with National Operational Guidance; that there are ongoing resource requirements to provide assurance on progress for embedding the fire standards; and that there may also be future resource requirements for additional roles providing assurance in other critical areas.

62. **HER MAJESTY THE LATE QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDALS**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 9 in the minute book) on the Service's position on the eligibility for her Majesty the Late Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medals. It had followed a deputation at the HIWFRA meeting in July on the exclusion of Control Room staff from the medal's eligibility.

The Committee agreed that having read the report and the correspondence in the appendices, although it is regrettable and that Members empathise with the staff, the matter should be closed.

Members discussed and agreed that the rules had to be accepted, but that they wanted to record that they value the Fire Control staff as much as those who attend incidents.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer agreed that the Fire Control function is critical, and the staff are absolutely valued.

The Committee suggested that a letter could be written by the Chairman of the Authority to the Fire Control Room staff explaining that they are valued, but that nothing further could be done on this occasion.

RESOLVED

The HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee noted the position regarding the eligibility of the Her Majesty the Late Queen Elizabeth the Second Platinum Jubilee Medals.

63. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

64. **EXEMPT MINUTE FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes were agreed without having the need to go into an exempt session.

Chairman,
HIWFRA Standards and Governance
Committee