

AT A MEETING of the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee held at
Fire & Police HQ, Eastleigh, on Monday 24th July, 2023

Chairman:

* Councillor Derek Mellor

Councillor David Harrison
* Councillor David Drew

Councillor Hugh Lumby
* Councillor Fran Carpenter

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors David Harrison, Karen Lucioni and Hugh Lumby. Councillor Fran Carpenter attended as a deputy for Hugh Lumby.

87. 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.

88. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed.

89. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations for the meeting.

90. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman confirmed that the Principal Officer Pay Review report was due to go to the July Full Authority meeting.

91. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 6 in the minute book) regarding the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

Following a summary of the report by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and questions by Members, the subsequent points were clarified:

- The Director of Operations would provide further information to Members on the strategy with regards to electric and alternative fuel vehicles.
- Further information would be found on the follow-up process to whistleblowing and the reporting of errors and faults and provided to Members

Members thanked officers for their work on the report.

RESOLVED

a) The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2022/23 as set out in **Appendix A** was approved by the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee

b) Members acknowledged that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the Framework 2016.

c) It was agreed that the approved AGS be included into the Annual Statement of Accounts, to meet the Authority's statutory requirement.

92. EXTERNAL AUDIT - AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 AND AUDIT PLANNING REPORT 2022/23

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 7 in the minute book) regarding the external auditors annual and audit planning reports.

The report was summarised and it was confirmed that a letter from Minister Rowley regarding the backlog experienced by external auditors had been circulated to Members for information.

The delays were being experienced nationally and it was anticipated that there may be subsequent delays to the 2022/23 audit, but it was positive that the 2021/22 accounts had been signed-off.

RESOLVED

The Auditor's Annual Report for 2021/22 and the Audit Planning Report for 2022/23 from EY was noted by the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee.

93. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Internal Auditor (item 8 in the minute book) regarding the progress of internal audit.

The report was summarised and it was acknowledged that whilst there were four overdue management actions all actions are logged and monitored closely until they are completed.

RESOLVED

The progress in delivering the internal audit plans for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and the outcomes to date was noted by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority Standards and Governance Committee.

94. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT & OPINION 2022-23

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Internal Auditor (item 9 in the minute book), providing the annual report and opinion.

The report was summarised and attention was drawn to the overall internal audit assurance opinion for 2022-23 which concluded that HIWFRA's framework of governance, risk management and management control is considered to be reasonable and audit testing has demonstrated controls to be working in practice.

The report also confirmed that Internal audit remains compliant with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and that the revised internal audit plan for 2022-23 had been delivered, with the exception of three reviews which were nearing completion.

The report summarised internal audit findings in the areas reviewed during the year and confirmed that where internal audit work identified areas where management controls could be improved or where systems and laid down procedures were not fully followed, appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement were agreed with the responsible managers. The number of open and overdue actions had reduced significantly over the last few years and remains low, demonstrating the Authority's commitment to improving the overall framework of control.

RESOLVED

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority Standards and Governance Committee accepted the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report & opinion statement for 2022-23.

95. INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer (item 10 in the minute book) on the management actions progress report.

The report was summarised and Members were taken through the management actions in section 6 of the report. There were no questions.

RESOLVED

The Standards and Governance Committee noted the progress made towards the implementation of the internal audit management actions and the delivery of the audit plan.

96. FIRE PENSION BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Chief Financial Officer (item 11 in the minute book), which summarised the work of the Pension Board for the 2022/23 financial year in the exercise of its functions.

Members were given the history of the Board and why it was initially set up and it was confirmed that a briefing session would be provided to Members after the

next meeting on the role of Standards and Governance Committees responsibilities as a Pension Scheme Manager.

RESOLVED

The content of the report was noted by the HIWFRA Standards and Governance Committee

Chairman,