



HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AUTHORITY

Audit and Standards Committee

AGENDA

Wednesday, 29 July 2020

10:30

This will be held as a virtual meeting on Teams.

The meeting can be accessed via a link which will be emailed to participants.

Information for Members of the Public

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority will be holding this meeting in accordance with the arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to: Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting, to be conducted remotely by video conferencing between invited participants and live streamed on the internet for general access. You are able to listen and view the live video stream of the meeting via the link that will be published on the Fire Authority's website <https://hwfire.cmis.uk.com/hwfire/Meetings.aspx>

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – YOUR RIGHTS. The press and public have the right to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. You have:

- 1) the right to attend all Authority and Committee meetings by viewing or listening to the live stream unless the business to be transacted would disclose “confidential information” or “exempt information”;
- 2) the right to film, record or report electronically on any meeting to which the public are admitted provided you do not do so in a manner that is disruptive to the meeting.
- 3) the right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>);
- 4) the right to inspect minutes of the Authority and Committees for up to six years following the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>); and
- 5) the right to inspect background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.

If you are participating at a virtual meeting of the Authority under the Public Participation item, you will be deemed to have consented to being broadcast via the Authority’s website and/or filmed or recorded by the Authority and/or anyone exercising their rights under paragraph 2 above. Alternatively, your representations can be read out at the meeting on your behalf.

Please also note that when taking part in public participation, your name and a summary of what you say at the meeting may be included in the minutes.

If you have any queries regarding this agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of these rights of access to information please contact Committee & Members’ Services by email at committeeservices@hwfire.org.uk.

WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY’S MEETING. These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Members** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire Authority comprises 25 Members and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Members who are Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 who are Herefordshire Council Councillors. The Police & Crime Commissioner also attends Fire Authority meetings as a non-voting Member.

Agenda Papers - Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

Chairman - The Chairman is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting.

Officers - Also present during the meeting will be the Chief Fire Officer and/or other Officers of the Fire Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

The Business - The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

Decisions - At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Members to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.

Protocols for Remote Meetings

Status of these protocols

- These protocols supplement the new legislative arrangements permitting remote meetings of a local authority, under the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.
- The Monitoring Officer reserves the right to amend or revoke these protocols at any time on reasonable notice. These protocols may also be revoked, superseded or amended by any standing orders that the Authority specifically adopts in respect of remote meetings.
- These protocols apply to anyone participating in a remote meeting, being: Members, officers, members of the public, other invited participants.

Participating in a remote meeting

- Officers and Members should join the meeting no less than 15 minutes before the scheduled start time to allow for any technical issues and avoid disrupting proceedings after the start time.
- At the start of the meeting the chairman will conduct a roll-call to confirm who is present and check for any connectivity issues.
- Where using video-enabled equipment, Members are asked to leave their cameras on throughout the meeting (unless connection speeds militate against this).
- Members should mute the microphone on their device when not speaking in order to reduce feedback and background noise. Committee and Members' Services can perform this function as well.

Access to documents

- Committee and Members' Services will publish the agenda and reports for meetings on the Fire Authority's website in the usual way and will notify Members and Officers by email.
- Members can either download the agenda pack from the link to the website or use the PDF sent with the email on a separate device to the one which they are using for the remote meeting.
- Printed copies will be sent to Members and Officers to support the effective conduct of the meeting where necessary. Printed copies will not be available for inspection at the Fire Authority's offices.

Officer Presentations

- Any presentations from Officers (eg Powerpoint) will be circulated to Members in PDF format in advance wherever possible and will be displayed on screen at the relevant point in the meeting. Where possible, presentations will be published on the Authority's website alongside the reports.
- When referring to reports or making specific comments, Officers should refer to the agenda page number so that all parties have a clear understanding of what is being discussed.

Protocol for Members speaking at meetings

- The Authority will be using Microsoft Teams, which will enable Members to participate in meetings remotely.
- The Chairman will ask all Members who wish to speak to indicate by pressing the 'raise your hand' button. Please do not speak or turn on your microphone until invited to do so by the Chairman. After speaking you must 'lower your hand' and turn off your microphone.

- The Chairman's ruling in regard to who should speak will be final and the Chairman will have the ability to mute any attendee's microphone if required.
- When referring to reports or making specific comments, Members should refer to the agenda page number so that all parties have a clear understanding of what is being discussed.

Voting

- Where it appears to the Chairman that the will of the majority of Members in the meeting is clear, the Chairman may put the motion to the meeting and ask if there are any votes against or any Members wishing to abstain. Those Members not voting against the motion or indicating they wish to abstain will be taken to be in favour.
- In all other circumstances a named vote will be taken. The Monitoring Officer will read out the Members' names, record the votes and announce the outcome to the meeting.
- Named votes will not be recorded in the minutes unless an individual Councillor asks to be recorded as voting "for", "against" or "abstained".

Participation by members of the public and the media

- A member of the public who has been given permission to speak during the public participation section of the meeting will be sent the relevant link to join the remote meeting and be invited to participate at the relevant point on the agenda. Members of the public who have been given permission by the Chairman to address a meeting may read out their question or written statement, of which prior notice will have been given, when invited to do so by the Chairman.
- As an alternative, members of the public who wish to address the meeting may submit a written statement that can be read out by the Chairman at the appropriate time.

Dealing with exempt items of business

- When confidential, or "exempt" information – as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – is under consideration, the Chairman and Monitoring Officer will close the meeting and a private meeting will convene with Officers and Members only.
- Any Councillor or Officer in remote attendance who fails to disclose that there are other persons present, who are not permitted to see and/or hear the meeting, will be in breach of the Authority's Code of Conduct.

Dealing with technical difficulties

- In the event that the Chairman or Monitoring Officer identifies a failure of the remote participation facility, the Chairman may declare an adjournment while the fault is addressed.
- If it is not possible to address the fault and the meeting is inquorate, the meeting will be abandoned until such time as it can be reconvened.
- If the meeting remains quorate, it will continue. A vote will be taken in the absence of any Members who are unable to continue to participate remotely.
- If the meeting was due to determine an urgent matter or one which is time-limited and it has not been possible to continue because of technical difficulties, the matter may be dealt with in accordance with the 'urgent business' arrangements permitted by the Authority's Constitution.

Interpretation

Where the Chairman is required to interpret the Authority's Constitution in light of the requirements of remote participation, he or she shall take advice from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer prior to making a ruling, where practicable. The Chairman's decision in all cases shall be final.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 29 July 2020,10:30

Agenda

Councillors

Mr M Hart (Chairman), Mr A Amos (Vice Chairman), Ms P Agar, Mr S Bowen, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mrs K Hey, Mr R J Morris, Dr K Pollock, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee

No.	Item	Pages
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	
2	Named Substitutes To receive details of any Member of the Authority nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3	Declarations of Interest (if any) This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda.	
4	Confirmation of Minutes To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2020.	1 - 5
5	Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20 Details	

6 Internal Audit Progress Report 2019/20 & 2020/21

Details

7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025

To present the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan 2020-2025 and to outline the proposed areas of focus.

8 Strategic Risk Register – Annual Update

Details

9 Organisational Development and Challenge Group Update and People Strategy 2020 – 2022 - Progress Update

Details

10 Health and Safety Committee Update

Details



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 22 January 2020, 10:30

Chairman: Mr M Hart

Vice-Chairman: Mr A Amos

Minutes

Members Present: Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr S Bowen, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr M Hart, Dr K Pollock, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee

158 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs K Hey, Mr A Hardman and Mr R Morris.

159 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

160 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

161 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 15 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

162 Internal Audit Draft Audit Plan 2020/21

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with the Draft Audit Plan for 2020/21.

Members were made aware of a typographical error in paragraph 8 with reference to a watching brief being kept on the financial systems over the

past 2 years. It should state that it does not indicate any particular increase in risk or identified issue.

Members were pleased to note that operational progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 would be closely monitored by the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service and would be reported to the Committee on a quarterly basis, which would also include any 'high' priority recommendations.

A Member queried whether the Committee was able to ask for Audits to be undertaken in certain areas where they felt it was necessary and were assured that any suggestions should, in the first instance, be directed to the Senior Management Board who would then discuss with the Auditors and make a recommendation to the Committee as appropriate.

A Member expressed her concern whether the Committee could have done more to support the Authority in relation to the HMICFRS inspection report. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this was not the case but welcomed any feedback from Members on areas that they felt required further focus.

[Cllr Eyre entered the meeting at 10.40am]

RESOLVED that the 2020/21 Draft Internal Audit Plan be approved.

163 Internal Audit Progress Report 2019/20

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with a progress update on the delivery and progress to date on 2019/20. He explained that five reviews had been completed and the outcomes were all positive.

Members were pleased to note that the Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 was progressing steadily and any recommendations in regards to the reports produced throughout the year were being addressed through robust management action plans and in a timely manner.

A Member requested clarification on the review of financial processes and the recommendation to strengthen training and segregation of duties.

With regard to segregation of duties for the main ledger, it was explained that smaller teams needed a clearer segregation of duties and the use of automated systems, where available, should be encouraged.

With regard to Equality and Diversity training, the Chief Fire Officer explained that an action plan had been put in place with management to ensure that the right training was getting to the right people in a timely

manner.

[Cllr Bowen entered the meeting at 10.51am]

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

164 People Strategy 2020 - 2022

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Members with the People Strategy 2020-2022.

Members were advised that the NFCC People Strategy runs until 31 March 2022 and therefore it was proposed to review and renew the current People Strategy to ensure it accurately reflected the priorities over the next two years representing the Service's commitment to supporting and developing the workforce in delivering the strategy. A further review would be completed to align with the NFCC update for April 2022.

Members were pleased to note that with the introduction of a new strategy, training would be delivered in bite size chunks to staff to meet the needs of the workforce.

A Member welcomed the strategy and thought it was very positive, but sought reassurance there wasn't a blame culture in the organisation. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer assured Members that there was a revised set of values published in all work locations and that staff were now happy to report health and safety events as they knew they would be dealt with correctly with no blame.

With regard to the workforce getting their view and opinions across to management, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that they were either passed on from Representative Bodies or fed back following Senior Management Board visits to all teams and watches where honest discussions took place.

RESOLVED that the People Strategy 2020-2022 be accepted and the proposed action areas to be included in the People Strategy Implementation Programme be noted.

165 Review of Financial Regulations

The Treasurer requested Members to approve the revised set of Financial Regulations.

Members were informed that in order to reflect the Strategic Alliance between the Fire Authority and Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, the latest review had taken an integrated approach and aligned, as far as possible, the Regulations of both Services. Members were assured that there were no practical changes to the arrangements and therefore there was no direct impact on the way the Authority already operates.

A Member requested that the Regulations be gender neutral and the Treasurer confirmed that amendments would be made to reflect this.

Members queried the differences in Hereford & Worcester's version to Shropshire and Wrekin's and were assured by the Head of Legal Services that although both Authorities had the same common Regulations, certain specifics to each Authority would always be different.

A Member queried if both Authorities used the same Auditors. The Treasurer confirmed that both Authorities use the same External Audit company, however a different team, but Internal Audit had separate arrangements at present.

RESOLVED that the Committee approves the revised Financial Regulations.

166 Health and Safety Committee Update

The Head of Operational Support presented Members with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

A Member had concern over the increase in vehicle collisions. The Head of Operational Support assured Members that the statistics included incidents that were not the Service's fault and had no concerns.

A Member requested an explanation with regard to the lack of supply of water at two incidents. Members were assured that on the one occasion it was due to an electronic fault on the appliance and the other was due to a new housing estate not uploaded on the hydrant map system which caused a delay in obtaining additional water.

[Cllr Stark left the meeting at 11.44am]

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

(i) Health and Safety performance information recorded between July 2019 to September 2019 (Quarter 2;

(ii) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives.

At the end of the meeting Members thanked officers for the interesting tour of the Wyre Forest Hub in December and in particular were pleased to hear that the station staff had been involved in the design.

The Meeting ended at: 11:45

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman