



HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AUTHORITY

Audit and Standards Committee

AGENDA

Thursday, 08 October 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

Thursday, 08 October 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 29 July 2020.	1 - 5
5	Draft Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 Details	

6 Audit Progress and External Audit Findings Reports 2019/20

Details

7 Statement of Accounts 2019/20

Details

8 Annual Statement of Assurance 2020-21

Details

9 Internal Audit Progress Report 2020/21

Details

10 Health and Safety Committee Update

Details

11 Equality Monitoring 2019/2020 – Interim Report

Details



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 29 July 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 Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mr R J Morris, Dr K Pollock, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee

167 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs K Hey.

168 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

169 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

170 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 22 January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

171 Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with the Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20.

Members were advised that the Internal Audit Charter provided Members with information on how the internal audit to the Fire Authority was

delivered and what could be expected as work progressed throughout the year. Members were assured that overall the report confirmed a very sound position in regard to 19/20 and the expectation would continue through to 20/21 even considering the events that were currently being dealt with.

[Cllr Agar and Cllr Bowen entered the meeting at 10.41am].

Members were also advised that the audit plan delivered in 2019/20 provided an assurance level of "full" for two core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations.

A Member queried how the findings of the consultancy review was reported to Members. The Head of Internal Audit clarified that the findings were contained in an overview report. Challenges are raised with the particular team and they seek to ensure the challenges are picked up as part of the implementation which ensures the value for money aspect is achieved.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Internal Audit Charter and that the audit plan delivered in 2019/20 provided an assurance level of "full" for two core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations.

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

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service updated Members on the delivery of the Internal Audit Plans for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Members were informed that the Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 had progressed steadily throughout the financial year with 2 remaining reviews to finalise. Members had also been informed that Business Continuity had been deferred.

With regard to 2020/21, the Internal Audit Plan would continue on a priority basis agreed by the Treasurer but would not be completed in full and there would be a requirement to roll over certain reviews to the next financial year on a risk basis.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

173 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025

The Head of Community Risk and HR & Development presented the

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

Members were informed that the Plan enables the Service to articulate its equality objectives and aspirations, meet its legal duties and address areas for improvement.

Members were pleased to note that two Champions had recently been elected, Cllr Oborski and Cllr Baker Price, who would be attending quarterly meetings and update reports against the Plan would be brought to this Committee on a 6 monthly basis.

A Member expressed her concerns with the use of the term 'sex' rather than 'gender' and it was agreed that this would be amended throughout the Plan.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

i) considered the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025 and noted the proposed areas of focus.

ii) amended the term 'sex' to 'gender' throughout the Plan prior to publication.

174 Strategic Risk Register – Annual Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented Members with an annual update on the Strategic Risk Register.

Members were informed that the Strategic Risk Register and Departmental Risk Registers were a method for continual monitoring and reviewing the Service's risks by the Senior Management Board and middle managers informing the Service's objectives and business goals over time.

Members were reminded that this process had been in place since 2017 with a routine review due in 2020, however this had been postponed due to the department being completely involved in Covid planning.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

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

The Head of Human Resources & Development updated Members on the Organisational Development and Challenge Group, including People

Strategy progress in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

A Member queried whether the role of the OCDG had an input to judge progression. Members were assured that there were a number of work streams, including 'Women@HWFire', that were used for their knowledge and experience to influence the role going forward. The OCDG group could also be directed to look into specific areas. Members were extremely pleased to note that there was no hierarchy for this group.

RESOLVED that the following areas of progress were noted:

- i) The Organisational Development and Challenge Group continues to act as a critical friend with regards to cultural change;**
- ii) The People Strategy 2020-2022 was approved and is now live on the Service website;**
- iii) An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer was appointed and a Positive Action Plan was approved to help increase the Service's workforce diversity;**
- iv) Two FRA Champions for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were appointed; and**
- v) People Strategy objectives to be met by the HR & Development team have been mapped into a People Delivery Plan, which also encompasses HMICFRS recommendations.**

176 Health and Safety Committee Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

Members were provided with an overview of the arrangements for managing Covid. Members were pleased to note that in total the Service has had approximately 44 employees tested for Covid, 37 tests were negative, 6 were confirmed and 1 was awaiting results. Members thanked the Service for their efforts in supporting Covid.

Members were also advised of the ongoing issue with regards to Droitwich Fire Station where appliances respond straight onto the Saltway on a sweeping bend and for many years there has been concern of having to pull out on a hazardous piece of road. Traffic calming measures implemented previously were not sufficient and the Service were now working with PPL and considering options following receipt of a report from Highways consultants.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular be noted:

i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during January to March 2020 (Quarter 4); and

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

The Meeting ended at: 12:15

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman