

# **HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25**

## **Scope of Responsibility**

1. Humberside Fire Authority (HFA) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
2. HFA has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
3. In discharging this overall responsibility, HFA is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
4. HFA has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance applicable to Members, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/ Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace) Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition. A copy of the code can be obtained from the Secretary to the Fire Authority.
5. HFA has approved and adopted the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services for employees to abide by.
6. This statement explains how HFA has complied with the code of corporate governance and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(3) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement.

## **The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

7. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values, by which HFA is directed and controlled. The framework demonstrates how the HFA accounts to, engages with and leads within the community. It enables HFA to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.
8. The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
9. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of HFA's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
10. The governance framework has been in place at HFA for the year ending 31 March 2025 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

## **The Governance Framework 2024/25**

11. The key elements of the HFA's governance framework included:
  - (a) The [Constitution](#) of the Authority which includes:
    - Committee Membership and Terms of Reference;
    - Scheme of Delegation to Officers;

## HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25

- Financial Procedure Rules;
  - Contract Procedure Rules;
  - Members' Code of Conduct;
  - Employees' Code of Conduct;
  - Protocol for Member and Officer relationships;
  - Code of Corporate Governance.
- (b) The Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee, as well as HFA itself, received regular reports on the Service's performance arrangements.
- (c) An approved [Corporate Risk and Opportunity Policy](#).
- (d) An approved 'Local Code of Corporate Governance' in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for Corporate Governance.
- (e) The designation of the Chief Fire Officer as Chief Executive responsible to the HFA for all aspects of operational management.
- (f) The designation of the Executive Director of Finance and S.151 Officer (Local Government Act 1972) in accordance with Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and conforming with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010).
- (g) The designation of the Secretary as Monitoring Officer with the requirement to report to the full HFA if it is considered that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration.
- (h) The Executive Leadership Team has considered a strategic overview of HFA control environment, including the response to external audit, performance management, strategic planning and scrutiny of risk and opportunity management.
- (i) Finance Planning process.
- The production of quarterly [Finance and Procurement Updates](#) which are distributed to all members of SLT and are considered at the GAS Committee and HFA meetings.
  - The production of a [Medium Term Resource Strategy](#).
  - The production of an annual [Productivity and Efficiency Plan](#).
- (j) Strategic Planning process.
1. The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2021-25 was published in line with the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, providing a detailed assessment of the risks facing our communities and personnel and the measures taken to mitigate those risks. The CRMP was approved by the Fire Authority on 7 December 2020 following a public consultation and is reviewed annually.
  2. The Strategic Plan 2021-25 included strategic objectives and Directorate responsibilities. The Strategic Plan was approved by the Fire Authority on 7 December 2020.
- (k) Financial crime management and speaking up provision.

## HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25

- The Service is committed to the highest possible standards of integrity, openness, fairness, inclusivity, probity and accountability. HFA aims to provide a positive and supportive culture to enable employees to raise their concerns.
  - The Service publishes its [Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Anti-Bribery and Anti-Money Laundering Policies](#) and other such Policies, associated data and information on the Website under Data Transparency.
  - The Service has in place a [Whistleblowing Policy](#) published on its website. Staff and the public can also raise serious concerns through the independent reporting line, Independent Speak Up (a contract procured by the Service powered by Crimestoppers).
  - The Service has 'Freedom to Speak up Guardian' roles, providing another independent reporting route for staff to raise concerns.
- (l) A Service Improvement Plan is in place that ensures improvement areas across the Service, including any actions arising from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection, are documented, evidenced and regularly reviewed.
- (m) Member and Officer Development Programmes. During 2024/25 Officers undertook facilitated supportive leadership development. Access to the T2Hub of Management and Leadership Self Development resources, Continual Professional Development through the Leadership Forum and Guest Speakers and Officers completing the Executive Leadership Programme.
- (n) Scheduled Member Days throughout the year support Member development and awareness of developing agenda for the Service and across the Sector as a whole.
- (o) An approved [Treasury Management Strategy](#) with Prudential Indicators.
- (p) A Protective Marking Scheme (based upon the His Majesty's Government Security Framework).
- (q) In line with the Equality Act 2010, the publication of [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Priorities](#).
- (r) Aligned service delivery with our four Local Authorities (Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire) through District management teams, is helping partnership work and assists us to be closer and more accountable to local communities.
- (s) Bi-Annual Performance Reports to HFA are published on our [website](#).
- (t) A Pension Board, as required under The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015, was formed in 2015 to oversee compliance in the operation of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS). The Pension Board met twice during 2024/25.
- (u) Regular Joint Consultative Committee meetings attended by all Representative Bodies to discuss any matters relating to staff terms and conditions.
- (v) Member Champions continue to support functional areas and are invited to attend local District performance meetings and to meet with Area Managers and Executive Directors.

## **HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25**

- (w) Consultation on our Council Tax Precept for 2024/25 drew many responses (1119) from our community. This allowed Fire Authority Members to make an informed decision on the setting of the precept.
- (x) A Service or Local Level Serious Incident Review (SIR) is conducted within 30 days of a serious incident. The purpose of the SIR is to investigate an incident that has led to the serious injury or death of a person(s). This inclusive process enables the Service, along with partners and stakeholders, to come together and identify, develop, implement, and embed learning opportunities.
  - One Service Level SIR has been conducted over the past twelve-month period, which resulted in one male fatality.
  - Over the same twelve-month period two local level reviews were conducted.
  - All learning from these reviews has been communicated and shared at the Regional Prevention Performance Meeting and the National NFCC Safeguarding Practitioners Meeting.
- (y) In line with legislative requirements HFRS published its [Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report](#) by the end of March 2025.
- (z) Emergency Preparedness for significant events is assured through provision of a fulltime team, established and tested Business Continuity Plans and a lead role within the Humber Local Resilience Forum (LRF).
- (aa) Policies relating to compliance, management and administration of information governance, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) are published on the [website](#).

### **Review of Effectiveness**

- 12. HFA has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Service who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the head of internal audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 13. The GAS Committee has continued its scrutiny programme during 2024/25, including the scrutiny of:
  - HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services
  - Estates Strategy
  - Disciplinary Investigation Training
  - Fire Control - Exercises and Debrief
  - Financial Plans

The induction of new Members and continuing training of all Members (via Member Days and Member Champion meetings) during 2024/25 has further enabled Members to discharge the functions of the HFA.

- 14. During the 2024/25 financial year, HFA and its committees met as follows:
  - HFA - six occasions
  - GAS Committee - five occasions
  - Pension Board - two occasions

**HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25**

15. Members of the Pension Board receive reports against a number of key workstreams designed to ensure that the Board operates in compliance with the Pension Regulator's Code of Practice for Pension Boards, this encompasses three broad areas: Governance, Administration and Communication.
16. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:
- The work of Senior Officers
  - The work of Internal Audit
  - Corporate Risk and Opportunity
  - Performance information
  - The Authority's External Auditor, in their Auditor's Annual Report, Audit Completion Report, Annual Audit Letter and other reports.
17. Internal Audit has undertaken a number of reviews during 2024/25. The following areas were covered:
- Application of Management of Disciplinary Procedures
  - Application and Management of Tactical Plans
  - Contingency Fire Crew (CFC)
  - Firefighter Development Pathway
  - Management of Statutory Building and Licensing Consultations
  - Staff Forums and EDI Steering Group
  - Training Records
  - ICT Management Controls
  - Key Financial Controls
18. The Service is fully compliant against the CIPFA Financial Management Code. Full compliance against the code became mandatory from 1 April 2022.
19. The Head of Internal Audit annual opinion for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 was satisfied that, for the areas reviewed during the year, the Service has reasonable and effective risk management, control and governance processes in place. The Authority proactively utilises Internal Audit as an effective tool to receive independent assessment and assurance in targeted areas of work as identified by the Service Improvement Framework.
20. The effectiveness of the governance framework is considered throughout the year by SLT, the GAS Committee and HFA. Much of this is discharged through internal reports such as Finance and Procurement Updates and Performance Reports as well as the work of Internal and External Audit. Any significant issues are captured via the risk management system and considered by the Fire Authority where appropriate.

**Governance Update 2024/25**

21. There were no significant governance issues during 2024/25.
22. Members are assured that the Service has appropriate arrangements in place should use of the powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 be necessary. There was no use of RIPA or requests for covert surveillance during 2024/25.
23. The Police & Crime Act 2017 places a statutory duty upon Fire and Rescue, Police and Ambulance services to collaborate.

## HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25

24. We continue to proactively identify collaborative opportunities with the Police, Ambulance services and other bodies. This has included:
- A joint Emergency Service Fleet Management workshop with the Humberside Police.
  - A joint Estates function with Humberside Police.
  - Shared provision of a Health and Safety function with Humberside Police, managed by the Service.
  - Provision of a medical First Responder scheme in partnership with Yorkshire Ambulance (YAS), East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS).
  - A Falls, Intervention Response, Safety Team (F.I.R.S.T) in partnership with NHS partners, Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
  - An agreement with Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) for them to provide Service wide Clinical Governance.
  - Memorandums of Understanding with Humberside Police and Ambulance Trusts to support response activities including:
    - Fire Investigation
    - Forced Entry for Medical Rescues
    - Drone
    - Bariatric
  - An Integrated Health Centre incorporating a Full-Time fire station, in partnership with Humber, Coast and Vale ICS.
  - A Fire and Police Transformation Board continues to review collaboration opportunities where they are beneficial and practicable.
  - The provision of S151 and Deputy S.151 officer function to Humberside PCC.
  - 'Don't Cross the Line' campaign to support stopping attacks on Emergency Service Workers.
25. The Service was inspected by HMICFRS between July and September 2024 and rated as Outstanding in 'Understanding fires and other risks', and in 'Preventing fires and other risks.' In addition, under the 11 areas of inspection criteria, the Service achieved eight Good ratings and one Adequate rating. During the inspection the Service was also recognised for a number of promising and innovative practices. The Service has a Service Improvement Plan in place, which it uses to record, manage, monitor and assess the actions it takes in relation to continuous improvement. Performance monitoring against the Service Improvement Plan is undertaken through the monthly Strategic Leadership Team performance meetings.
26. No Whistleblowing allegations were received during 2024/25. The Service has in place a [Whistleblowing Policy](#) published on the website.
27. On 16 December 2024 the Government published its White Paper *English Devolution*, which set out the Government's plans to widen and deepen devolution across England, providing mayors with unprecedented powers and funding and hardwiring them into the way government works. As part of the White Paper, where mayoral geographies align with police force and fire and rescue geographies, Mayors will be, by default, responsible for exercising Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority functions. Further exploration would be undertaken as to whether a single Mayor can take responsibility for Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority functions across two or more Force or two or more Fire and Rescue Authority areas, where this would result in coterminous boundaries.

The Service will continue to monitor further progress and development of this through the progression of the English Devolution Bill.

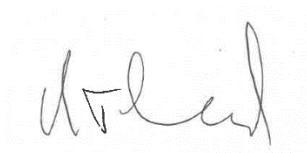
**HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY  
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25**

**Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register**

28. The Service has in place a Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register which enables it to understand, monitor and mitigate against the Service's overall risk profile. The Service can use a range of techniques for identifying specific risks that may potentially impact on one or more objectives. The top critical Strategic Risks and Opportunity for 2024/25 were as follows:

Strategic Risk	Strategic Opportunity
Financial Constraints Around National Grant Funding	HFRS Vision 2040
Joint Estates Service Provision	

**Signed**



Councillor Nigel Sherwood  
Chair of the Fire Authority



Phil Shillito  
Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive



Martyn Ransom  
Section 151 Officer



Lisa Nicholson  
Secretary & Monitoring Officer to the  
Fire Authority