HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/26

HUMBERSIDE
Fire Authority

Executive Summary

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of Humberside Fire Authority (the Authority) for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. It is informed by an annual review of governance undertaken in line with the principles of good governance as set out in *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework* (2016 Edition) and *Addendum, covering the annual review of governance and the annual governance statement* (May 2025) by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

The Authority is satisfied that its governance arrangements were fit for purpose during 2025/26 and supported the delivery of its strategic objectives, statutory responsibilities and value for money duties. No significant governance failures were identified during the year. Arrangements were in place and operating effectively across the key principles of good governance, supported by a robust system of internal control and assurance.

The Authority remains committed to continuous improvement and recognises the importance of ensuring that governance arrangements remain resilient and responsive to future challenges. Key areas of focus for 2026/27 include responding to the evolving national policy and devolution landscape, maintaining financial sustainability, and strengthening organisational capacity and culture.

Our Review of Effectiveness

How the review was conducted

The Authority has a responsibility under The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement.

There is a requirement to undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The review for 2025/26 was coordinated by senior officers and informed by multiple sources of assurance gathered throughout the year, rather than solely at year-end.

The review drew on:

- The current Governance framework.
- Assurances provided by statutory officers and senior management on the effectiveness of governance arrangements within their areas of responsibility.
- The annual opinion of the Head of Internal Audit which was satisfied that, for the areas reviewed during the year, the Service had reasonable and effective risk management, control and governance processes in place.
- Performance and financial monitoring reports considered by the Fire Authority and the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee.
- The Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register and associated risk management processes.
- Findings, reports and feedback from external audit and external inspection bodies.

- Outcomes from GAS Committee scrutiny activity and Authority Member engagement.

This evidence was considered collectively to form an overall assessment of whether governance arrangements were adequate, operating effectively, and aligned to the seven principles of good governance.

Review Outcome

The key elements of the Authority's governance framework included:

(1) The Constitution of the Authority which includes:

- Committee Membership and Terms of Reference.
- Designation of Statutory Officers
- Scheme of Delegation to Officers.
- Financial Procedure Rules.
- Contract Procedure Rules.
- Members' Code of Conduct.
- Employees' Code of Conduct.
- Protocol for Member and Officer relationships.
- Code of Corporate Governance.

(2) The GAS Committee, as well as the Authority itself, received regular reports on the Service's performance arrangements.

(3) An approved Corporate Risk and Improvement Framework Policy which includes risk management and the regular monitoring and review of the Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register.

(4) An approved 'Local Code of Corporate Governance' in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for Corporate Governance.

(5) The designation of the Chief Fire Officer as Chief Executive responsible to the Authority for all aspects of operational management.

(6) 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).

(7) The designation of the Secretary as Monitoring Officer with the requirement to report to the full Authority if it is considered that any proposal, decision or omission would give rise to unlawfulness or maladministration.

(8) The Executive Leadership Team has considered a strategic overview of the Authority control environment, including the response to external audit, performance management, strategic planning and scrutiny of risk and opportunity management.

(9) 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 Authority meetings.
- The production of a Medium Term Resource Strategy.
- The production of an annual Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

(10) Strategic Planning process.

- The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-28 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 Authority on 28 March 2025 following a public consultation and is reviewed annually.

- The Strategic Plan 2025-28 included strategic objectives and Directorate responsibilities. The Strategic Plan was approved by the Authority on 28 March 2025.

(11) Financial crime management and speaking up provision.

- The Service is committed to the highest possible standards of integrity, openness, fairness, inclusivity, probity and accountability. The Authority 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 on the website, and associated data under its data transparency section.
- 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.

(12) 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.

(13) Member and Officer Development Programmes.

- During 2025/26 Officers undertook facilitated supportive leadership development sessions. 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.

(14) Scheduled Member Days throughout the year support Member development and awareness of developing agenda for the Service and across the Sector as a whole.

(15) An approved Treasury Management Strategy with Prudential Indicators.

(16) A Protective Marking Scheme (based upon the His Majesty's Government Security Framework).

(17) In line with the Equality Act 2010, the publication of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Priorities.

(18) 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.

(19) Bi-Annual Performance Reports to the Authority are published on our website.

(20) 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 2025/26.

(21) Regular Joint Consultative Committee meetings attended by all Representative Bodies to discuss any matters relating to staff terms and conditions.

(22) 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.

(23) Public consultation on our Council Tax Precept allowing Authority Members to make an informed decision on the setting of the precept.

(24) A Service or Local Level Serious Incident Review (SIR) 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.

(25) In line with legislative requirements the Authority published its Gender, Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Report by the end of March 2026.

(26) 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).

(27) Policies relating to compliance, management and administration of information governance, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) are published on the website.

(28) The Service has appropriate arrangements in place should the 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 2025/26.

Partnership Working

(29) The Police & Crime Act 2017 places a statutory duty upon Fire and Rescue, Police and Ambulance services to collaborate. We continue to proactively identify collaborative opportunities with the Police, Ambulance services and other bodies. This has included:

- The provision of S151 and Deputy S.151 officer function to Humberside PCC.
- A joint Emergency Service Fleet Management workshop with the Humberside Police.
- A Joint Estates Service 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).
- The Hull 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.

Review Conclusion

- Governance arrangements were adequately aligned to support delivery of the Authority’s Community Risk Management Plan, mission, vision and strategic objectives, while meeting best value and stewardship responsibilities.
- The Authority had appropriate arrangements in place to support each of the seven principles of good governance, including ethical standards, openness and engagement, strategic planning, performance management, risk management and accountability.

- Core arrangements set out in the CIPFA/Solace Framework and Addendum were in place and operating effectively, including the roles of statutory officers, financial management arrangements, risk and assurance frameworks, internal audit and member oversight.
- Internal Audit concluded that the Authority had reasonable and effective risk management, control and governance processes for the areas reviewed during the year.

The overall conclusion that governance arrangements were fit for purpose was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team and considered by the GAS Committee as part of its scrutiny role.

Where Our Governance Needs to Improve

The review did not identify any significant governance failures during 2025/26. However, governance is not static and the Authority recognises that continuous improvement remains essential.

Areas for ongoing attention and improvement include:

- Ensuring governance arrangements remain sufficiently flexible and resilient to respond to emerging national developments, including legislative change and devolution proposals.
- Maintaining strong oversight of financial sustainability in the context of ongoing uncertainty around national funding and cost pressures.
- Continuing to strengthen leadership capacity, workforce development and organisational culture to support ethical behaviour, openness and high performance in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Core Code of Ethics.

Progress against these areas will be monitored through existing performance management, risk management and committee reporting arrangements.

How We Have Improved Our Governance Arrangements in 2025/26

During 2025/26 the Authority continued to strengthen its governance framework through a range of actions, including:

- Ongoing development and scrutiny of the Service Improvement Plan, including actions arising from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection activity.
- Continued use of Internal Audit as a source of independent assurance to support improvement in targeted areas.
- Enhanced leadership and management development activity to support organisational capacity, capability and culture.

- Regular review of strategic risks and opportunities through the Strategic Risk and Opportunity Register and reporting to Members.

Governance improvements implemented during the year will continue to be embedded and monitored where actions extend beyond the AGS period.

Forward Look on Governance

Looking ahead, the Authority recognises that governance arrangements will need to continue to evolve to meet future challenges and opportunities. Key areas likely to impact governance over the medium term include:

- Potential changes arising from national devolution policy and any future structural or accountability reforms affecting fire and rescue governance.
- Continuing financial pressures and the need to sustain robust financial planning, reserves management and value for money arrangements.
- Increasing complexity of partnership and collaborative working, requiring clear accountability, transparency and assurance arrangements.
- The ongoing requirement to ensure governance arrangements support organisational resilience, performance and public confidence.

The Authority will keep governance under regular review to ensure that arrangements remain fit for purpose and support the achievement of its strategic outcomes.

HUMBERSIDE
Fire Authority

Approval and Signatures

The Annual Governance Statement was approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting of 17 July 2026 following consideration by the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 6 July 2026.

Councillor Nigel Sherwood Chair of the Fire Authority	Phil Shillito Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive
Martyn Ransom Section 151 Officer	L Dixon Lisa Dixon Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority