

Report of the Head of Legal Services

9. Annual Governance Action Plan 2013/14

Purpose of report

1. To update the Committee on the progress of actions in relation to the Authority's Annual Governance Statement and corporate governance arrangements.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the following progress in relation to the action plan be noted:

- i) an agreed approach for consultation was developed as part of the CRMP 2014-2020;***
- ii) procedures for the annual appraisal of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer have been approved by the Policy and Resources Committee; and***
- iii) Governance Awareness Sessions have been undertaken with Middle Managers, Group Commanders and Station Commanders.***

Introduction and Background

2. Governance is about how the Authority ensures that it is doing the right thing, in the right way for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. It comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to and engages with its communities.
3. The Annual Governance Statement is essentially a summary of the governance arrangements of which Members are familiar. It reports publicly on the extent to which the Authority's governance arrangements have met the values, principles and best practice, as set out in the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance. Likewise, should the Authority have any significant governance weaknesses these will also be disclosed publicly within the Annual Governance Statement.
4. The Audit and Standards Committee has previously approved the Annual Governance Statement which was published as part of the Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.

Annual Governance Action Plan 2013/2014

5. An annual self-assessment review was carried out as part of the background work undertaken when drafting the Annual Governance Statement. The self assessment document also included an Action Plan incorporating any areas that needed further development.
6. The Action Plan is monitored by the Committee and sets out actions that are required to improve certain areas of corporate governance highlighted as part of the self-assessment. The Action Plan for 2013/14 was considered by the Committee on 26 September 2013 as part of the approval process of the Annual Governance Statement 2012/13.
7. The progress on 2013/14 actions are detailed in Appendix 1 and are summarised as follows:
 - i) a methodology for consultation has been developed as part of the CRMP 2014-2020;
 - ii) procedures for annual appraisal of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer have been approved by Policy & Resources Committee; and
 - iii) Governance Awareness Sessions have been undertaken with Middle Managers, Group Commanders and Station Commanders.

Conclusion/Summary

8. The Audit and Standards Committee has previously approved the Annual Governance Statement which was published as part of the Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts.
9. This report updates the Committee on the progress of actions in relation to that Statement to enable the Committee to undertake its role in monitoring the development and operation of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	The Annual Governance Action Plan provides an opportunity for Members to monitor governance arrangements.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications)	The Annual Governance Action Plan links with 'Our Strategy' as it demonstrates how the Authority strives to ensure the delivery of quality services.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores)	The Annual Governance Action Plan provides assurance for Members that governance arrangements are reviewed and improved where necessary.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No this has not been necessary as the Annual Governance Statement is a summary of existing arrangements. Should any significant new arrangements be developed an Equalities Impact Assessment may be deemed necessary.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Action Plan Updates

Background papers:

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011

CIPFA/SOLACE Framework

Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority Code of Corporate Governance

Contact Officer

Alison Hughes, Corporate Support Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

(01905 368209)

Email: ahughes@hwfire.org.uk