



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 25 April 2018, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr M Hart, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr S D Williams

89 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Guthrie, Cllr Raine, Cllr Pollock, Cllr Matthews

There were no named substitutes.

90 Declarations of Interest (if any)

None

91 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 24 January 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

92 External Audit Draft Plan 2018/19 (2017/18 Accounts)

The Audit Plan noted that of the work undertaken within all identified significant and possible risk areas none had returned with any significant findings of concern. In relation to the earlier close timeframe of 31 July 2018 Members were advised that further discussions would be on-going during the transition period to accommodate the change in governance of the Authority.

RESOLVED that the External Audit Plan 2018/19 (2017/18 Accounts) be noted.

93 Informing Audit Risk Assessment 2017/18 Accounts

Members were advised that there were no specific risks highlighted that were abnormal, or which cause the Treasurer or External Auditor concern. Members attention was drawn to five key areas where an understanding of management processes was critical. Members were asked to consider whether management responses were consistent with the Committees understanding.

Auditors thanked Members of the Committee for their attention and diligent scrutiny of Audit reports and wished them well for the future.

RESOLVED that the External Auditor's Informing the Audit Risk Assessment report be noted.

94 Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2017/18

Members were reassured that there were no high priority recommendations within the report and any actions that had been identified were being addressed through robust management plans. It was confirmed that there were two additional reports currently at draft stage and one further report progressing through fieldwork. The outcome of these reviews would be reported to the committee in summary form as soon as they were completed.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2017/18 be noted.

95 Internal Audit Draft Plan 2018/19

Members were asked to note that due to the continuing changing environment the plan must be seen as a flexible framework, reflecting the changing risk profile and emerging risks. It was noted that a six month review of the plan may be prudent in order to address such challenges and to compliment national initiatives. Members were informed that although core levels of days allocated to risk areas remained relatively unchanged as a precaution an additional 2/3 days had been added to the number of contingency days allocated for the 2018/19 plan to ensure flexibility with the forthcoming coming changes in governance arrangements.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Draft Plan 2018/19 be approved.

96 Annual Governance Statement 2017/18

Members were given a summary of the governance arrangements for 2017/18 and advised that procedures followed much the same format as previous years and there were no concerns to note. The Committee were informed that the annual self-assessment review noted evidence of compliance with all core and supporting principles of good governance and that all actions had been completed, with the exception of the review of Financial Regulations which could not be undertaken until completion of the Standing Orders for Regulation of Contracts. This review has been incorporated as an action for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 be approved.

97 Constitution Changes: Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts

Members were informed that the Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts required amendments to provide clarity and reflect updated changes to procurement practice, namely e-tendering and compliance with Public Contract Regulations 2015. Members were reassured that changes would further strengthen the governance arrangements with regards to procurement and also align with additional obligations regarding transparency.

RECOMMENDED that the amended Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts be approved.

98 Annual Report on Compliments, Complaints and Requests 2017/18

Members attention was drawn to four key aspects of the report. The first was the notable addition of Freedom of Information request data. Secondly acknowledgement by members of the public of the commitment, dedication and skill of HWFRS employees. Thirdly that our communities continue to remain vigilant and any concerns or queries about fire safety issues at organisations or indeed concerns about individuals are brought to our attention. Lastly that Officers keep a tight handle on any complaints about the service and in all cases this year each complaint a holding letter or full response within our own 10 working day deadline.

Members were reassured that Officers were satisfied there hadn't been any significant issues that warranted a review of service delivery and that

current practices and processes were fit for purpose and robust.
No significant levels of recurring themes or trends to give any cause for concern were noted.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report on Compliments, Complaints and Requests 2017/18 be noted.

99 Update from the Health and Safety Committee

It was emphasised to Members that health and safety is fully embedded within the culture of HWFRS and that reporting from staff on all relating matters is good. Locally the Health and Safety Committee Working Group are currently undertaking a piece of work looking in more detail at Organisational Road Risk and a comprehensive review is underway. Progress on this will be reported back in due course. Regionally as part of the agreed CFOA Business Plan HWFRS have recently been audited across four specific areas. An initial findings report will be issued imminently and findings will be reported back to the Committee at the next available opportunity.

RESOLVED that the Health and Safety performance information recorded during October 2017 to December 2017; and the involvement of the Service in a number of health and safety initiatives be noted.

The Meeting ended at: 11:34

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman