

9. Audit Committee Report

Purpose of report

1. To inform Members of the proceedings of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 January 2010 and to note The Annual Audit letter 2008/09.
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Recommendations

The Audit Committee recommends that:

- i) The Authority notes the proceedings of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 January; and***
- ii) The Authority notes The Annual Audit Letter 2008/09.***

Audit Committee Meeting on 21 January 2010

2. The Meeting noted updates on the following items:
 - i. The revised internal audit plans for 2009/10.
 - ii. Quarterly Risk Management update.
 - iii. Governance Review: The Clerk told the Committee that a Governance Review Group had been established, comprising the Audit Committee Chair, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, the Director of Finance, the Clerk, the Head of Planning and Policy and the Corporate Support Manager.
 - iv. The External Audit Opinion Plan for 2009/10.

The Annual Audit Letter 2008/09

3. The Committee received the Annual Audit Letter from the Audit Commission which assessed the Authority as “*performing well*” in its arrangements for Managing Finance, Governing the Business and Managing Resources. The key findings in the Commission’s audit 2008/09 were as follows:
 - a. the Authority maintained its track record as a high performing organisation;
 - b. the Authority was among the best services in the country for promoting equality and diversity;

- c. there was engagement with partners and communities and the Service championed wider agendas such as road safety, anti social behaviour, youth work, flooding and urban search and rescue; and
 - d. financial arrangements were effective and the 2008/09 accounts were completed, audited and approved well in advance of the required date of September.
- 4. The key areas for the Authority to address were improving the levels of sickness absence, the training of Members, to demonstrate evidence of a strong ethical framework and culture delivering outcomes and the quality of working papers supporting the financial statements.
- 5. The Committee welcomed the positive report and the Chairman thanked the Commission and the staff. The full Annual Audit Letter is attached at Appendix 1.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – The Annual Audit Letter from the Audit Commission to Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority for Audit 2008/09

Background papers – Agenda and papers for Audit Committee Meeting held on 21 January 2010.

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