



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 25 July 2018, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mr P Middlebrough, Dr K Pollock

100 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Ms K S Guthrie, Mr B Matthews, Prof J W Raine and Mr S D Williams.

101 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

102 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

103 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 25 April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

104 Statement of Accounts 2017/18

The Treasurer presented the Statement of Accounts 2017/18 to the Committee and was pleased to report that the Accounts had been signed off by the Treasurer on 30 May 2018.

Following consideration of the External Audit Findings Report (below) it was **RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts 2017/18 be approved.**

105 External Audit Findings Report 2017/18 Including Letter of Representation

The External Auditor presented the Auditors' Report to the Committee.

It was highlighted to Members the intention of issuing an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and an unqualified value for money conclusion. Members were advised that there were no control issues or weaknesses to be brought to the attention of the Committee and that no adjustments affecting the Authority's reported financial position were required.

The finance team were thanked for producing the Accounts in the new time constraints.

RESOLVED that:

i) the External Audit Findings Report 2017/18 including an unqualified opinion on the 2017/18 accounts be noted; and

ii) the letter of representation be approved on behalf of the Authority.

106 External Audit Fee 2018-19

The Treasurer reminded Members of the revised arrangements for the appointment of external auditors from 2018/19 and confirmed that Grant Thornton UK LLP had been appointed as auditors for five years commencing with the 2018/19 audit.

Members were informed that the scale fee for 2018/19 was £25,311 and that fees would be reviewed and updated as necessary as the audit work progressed.

RESOLVED that the External Audit Fee 2018/19 from Grant Thornton UK LLP be noted.

107 Internal Audit Annual Report 2017/18

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented a report detailing the achievement of the Internal Audit objectives as set out in the Internal Audit Plan 2017/18. The audit opinion and commentary on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment concluded that arrangements for 2017/18 had managed the principle risks effectively and could be relied upon to meet corporate objectives.

With regard to Risk Management, Members were assured that the development of formal risk management systems was sustained during the year and risk management continued to feature prominently.

In response to a question from a Member, it was explained that the process of internal audit was risk focussed rather than being a review of controlled mechanisms.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Internal Audit Charter and that the audit plan delivered in 2017/18 has provided an assurance level of "full" for three core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas have been report.

108 Internal Audit External Assessment 2017/18 Update Report

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented a report updating Members on the progress made towards implementing the Internal Audit External Assessment that took place during the 2017/18 financial year.

Members were informed that a review was undertaken by an independent assessor during early October 2017 and a report detailing the key outcomes was presented to the Client Officer Group in November 2017. The key outcomes identified that the Internal Audit Shared Service is solid and reliable and there were no areas of non compliance identified.

Internal Audit Shared Service was thanked by Members for an excellent outcome.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

109 Strategic Risk Register Review

The Head of Operational Support presented an update to the Committee on the Strategic Risk Register.

Members were informed that new processes and framework had been embedded in the management of the Strategic Risk Register and in the departmental level risk registers. Members were reassured that there was continual monitoring and reviewing taking place at quarterly Senior Management Board performance meetings and Middle Management Board meetings to ensure risks were being used to drive business.

In response to a question by a Member regarding resilience of power supply, it was explained that the Service had Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) at all locations with back up generators at the main locations. Members were also reassured that the Service held bulk fuel for vehicles

should there be a shortage at any time.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

110 Health and Safety Update

The Head of Operation Support provided the Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

Members' attention was drawn to an error in the section referencing in paragraph 6 of the report. It should have read sections 18-21, and not 5-7.

Members were informed that during Quarter 4 there had been a slight increase in personal injuries and vehicle collisions but the majority of events were of a minor nature. All events had a minimum of a local level investigation to identify preventative control measures, to help reduce the likelihood of similar occurrences.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

- i) The Health and Safety performance information recorded during January 2018 to March 2018 (Quarter 4).**
- ii) The involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives.**

The Meeting ended at: 11:21

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman