



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Tuesday, 27 September 2016, 10:30

## Minutes

**Members Present:** Mr A Amos, Ms L R Duffy, Mrs A T Hingley, Mr R I Matthews, Professor J W Raine, Mr G J Vickery

**Substitutes:** none

**Absent:** Ms P Agar

**Apologies for Absence:** Mr S C Cross, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr Al Hardman, Mr S D Williams

### 51 Appointment of Vice Chairman

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Adrian Hardman be appointed Vice Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee.

### 52 Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 4 July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 53 Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2016/2017

The committee were advised that outstanding audits from 2015/16 had now been completed and finalised. There had been no high priority recommendations, concerns or risks identified and a conclusion of Significant Assurance had been given.

Members were informed that the 2016/17 audit is progressing with a focus on Corporate Governance and the CARE (Career Average Revalued Earnings) System. Outcomes and assurance levels will be

reported at the next committee.

In the ensuing discussion Members officers confirmed that any areas of concern highlighted by the auditors would be the subject of clear action plans to ensure continued service improvement.

**RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2016/2017 and the residual 2015/16 work be noted.**

**54 Annual Statement of Accounts 2015/2016**

The Treasurer presented the 2015/2016 Statement of Accounts to the Committee which he highlighted were not substantially different to the presentation delivered at the last Audit and Standards Committee on 4 July 2016.

**RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts 2015/2016 be approved.**

**55 External Audit Findings Report 2015/2016 Including Letter of Representation**

The External Auditor highlighted to Members the intention to give an unqualified audit opinion on the Authority's 2015/16 accounts and give an unqualified Value for Money conclusion. Members were advised that there were no control issues or weakness' that need to be brought to the attention of the committee and no financial adjustments to make.

The Auditors asked the committee to note that the pension liability fund associated with those staff who transferred to Place Partnership Ltd. (PPL) were to be included in the Authority's accounts rather than in PPL's accounts. Auditors reassured Members that this was common practice.

There was a discussion about the forecast gap within the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Treasurer confirmed that reserves would only be used to resource smooth change and not fund ongoing expenditure.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) the External Audit Findings Report 2015/16 including, the anticipation of an unqualified opinion on the 2015/16 accounts be noted; and**
- ii) the letter of representation be approved on behalf of the Authority.**

**56 Statement of Assurance**

Members were presented with the Statement of Assurance which provides robust assurance levels in relation to financial, governance and operational matters.

***RESOLVED* that the draft Statement of Assurance 2016-17 be adopted and approved for publication.**

**57 Register of Interest for Officers**

Members were advised that as part of the regular review of the Authority's governance framework, the current policy with regards to staff interests and protocols have been reviewed. Existing requirements and procedures have now been brought together in one policy document.

Members were asked to note that in addition to the requirement for all staff to give notice of interests, senior members of staff should now expect to provide a higher degree of transparency in order to ensure public and Member confidence in their impartiality when advising or making decisions on behalf of the Authority.

***RESOLVED* that the Register of Staff Interests Policy be approved.**

The Meeting ended at: 11:15

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman