



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 12 April 2017, 10:30

Minutes

Members Present: Mr A Amos, Mr S C Cross, Ms L R Duffy, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr Al Hardman, Mrs A T Hingley, Mr S D Williams

Substitutes:

Absent: Councillor Ms Pat Agar

Apologies for Absence: Mr R I Matthews, Professor J W Raine, Mr G J Vickery

64 Declarations of Interest (if any)

None

65 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 18 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66 Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2016/2017

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service reported against the 2016/17 audit plan and highlighted to Members that there were no 'high' or 'medium' priority recommendations resulting from the work. Members were assured that any recommendations were being addressed through appropriate management actions and asked to note that reviews on CARE System Pensions, Safeguarding, Fees and Charges, Training Centre and Technical Fire Safety are currently at draft report stage and will be presented at the next Audit and Standards Committee.

RESOLVED the Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2016/17 be noted.

67 Internal Audit Draft Audit Plan 2017-18

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service provided the draft Audit Plan for 2017/18 highlighting the timetable of scheduled audits to be undertaken during the year, the determination of which is measured on risk. Outturns from work will be closely monitored and will be brought to the Committee throughout the year.

Members were asked to note that following full assurance reports on key financial systems in 2016/17 less audit time will be allocated to these areas this year.

Members queried the level of security and degree of risk attached to ICT but were reassured by officers that penetrative testing formed part of the regular testing process. Officers highlighted that ICT continued to be an identified risk and would remain an on-going risk item on the register. Members also questioned the scope of the intended audit around partnership arrangements and were informed these would focus on ensuring that effective governance arrangements were in place from the outset of any contractual or shared service partnership to protect the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED the 2017/18 Draft Internal Audit Plan be approved.

68 External Audit Plan 2016/2017

The External Audit Plan explained the potentially significant risks that would be considered as part of the 2016/17 audit and advised Members that work was on track to meet the delivery schedule. As part of a phased approach to meeting new deadlines next year an agreed Audit Findings report will be completed by mid August 2017.

RESOLVED the External Audit Plan 2016/17 be noted.

69 Informing the Audit Risk Assessment 2016-17

Members were advised to note that there were no specific risks highlighted that were abnormal, or which cause the Treasurer or External Auditor particular concern.

Members attention was drawn to the Going Concern consideration and reminded that their role as an Audit Committee was, as far as they were able, to confirm or raise any queries regarding management response.

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

70 Strategic Risk Register: Progress Against Audit Findings

The Authority's arrangements for dealing with risk management had been the subject of an internal Audit Review in March 2016. That report had highlighted four medium priority recommendations. The Head of Operational Support confirmed that the agreed action plan had been completed with all recommendations having now been implemented.

In response to questions Members were advised that the Authority is linked into local, regional and national risk registers thus ensuring risks are managed thoroughly and effectively and that the Authority remains updated on the risk from terrorism through National Intelligence Liaison Officers.

RESOLVED

i) the closure of the outcomes of the 2015/16 audit of Strategic and Departmental Risk Registers, based upon measures now implemented, be approved; and

ii) the new format adopted for the Strategic Risk Register and the changes made to the process and framework of all Risk Registers be noted.

71 National Fraud Initiative 2016/17

The Treasurer highlighted to Members that there has been a 44% reduction in matches identified by the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) exercise since 2014/15 but also emphasised that the existence of a match in an NFI report does not mean that there is a fraud; only that there is a need to investigate further to eliminate the possibility of fraud or error. The NFI outputs have been examined promptly and comprehensively and no fraud has been identified.

RESOLVED that action taken to date by the Authority in response to the National Fraud Initiative and that no fraud has been detected be noted.

72 Audit and Standards Committee Terms of Reference

The Head of Legal Services asked Members to consider improving the division of workload between Committees and proposed the reallocation of three areas of responsibility from Policy and Resources to Audit and Standards Committee and that the Terms of Reference be amended to reflect this. It was proposed that any such changes to would be introduced following Fire Authority approval at the Annual General Meeting which is scheduled to take place on 22 June 2017.

***RESOLVED* that**

i) the following areas of responsibility be reallocated to Audit and Standards Committee from Policy and Resources;

- Equality & Diversity**
- Health & Safety**
- Employment Monitoring**

ii) the amended Terms of Reference for Audit and Standards Committee be recommended to the Fire Authority for approval.

73 Member Development Plan 2017/2018

Members were presented with a draft Development Plan for 2017-18. It was highlighted that sessions within the Member Development Plan link in not only with the theme “Adding Extra Value - Saving More Lives”, but also with key foundations and objectives as set out in Our Strategy and have been influenced by the feedback received from Members on previous sessions.

***RESOLVED* the Member Development Plan 2017/18 be approved.**

74 Annual Compliments, Complaints and Concerns 2016/2017

Members were informed of the compliments, donations, complaints and concerns made by the public over the past 12 months. Reassurance was given that there were no significant recurring themes or trends in concerns or complaints to give any cause for concern and that officers were satisfied that no change in Service delivery was necessary.

***RESOLVED* that the Annual Compliments, Complaints and Concerns**

2016/17 Report be noted.

The Meeting ended at: 11:32

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman