



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

AGENDA

Tuesday, 30 July 2019

14:00

**Council Chamber
County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5 2NP**

Fire Alarm

- The fire alarm is tested every Tuesday at 13:45. Should the alarm sound at any other time you will need to leave the building via the nearest safe exit.)
- You will need to follow Officers to Assembly Point E (Northside) which is located outside the building.

Toilets

- There are male and female toilets with baby change facilities in reception and a disabled toilet within the Register Office at the entrance adjacent to reception.

Parking

- If you have parked in the visitor car park please collect a token from Reception upon leaving.
- Once the token has been inserted please wait for the traffic light to change to green before driving off. The barrier will lower only when the light is green.

Smoking Policy

- Smoking is not permitted anywhere within the building. There is a smoking shelter located by the cascades which are situated between the upper and lower lakes.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

Cafe

- There is a cafe located on the ground floor, a short distance from Reception which you are welcome to use. It sells a range of hot and cold foodstuffs as well as having a coffee bar.
- The Lakeview Cafe is open for business 08:00 to 15:00 Monday to Friday. The area is available for informal meetings unless specifically booked for an event although we ask that you only do so outside the busy lunchtime period when diners are given priority use.

Shop

- There is a shop adjacent to the cafe and stocks a range of sandwiches, snacks, sweets and newspapers.
- The shop's opening hours are 08:00 to 14:00 Monday to Friday
- There is a snack/cold drink vending machine immediately outside the shop for use during and outside of the shop's hours of business. There is also a KLIX hot drinks machine.

Grounds/Site traffic

- Please note that County Hall and its grounds are public therefore there may be any number of people walking around the site including those walking their dogs or travelling to the nearby schools.
- Due to this we have a site wide 10 mph speed limit

Public Transport

- There are two bus stops within the grounds of County Hall, one adjacent to each of the site entrances. Both have timetables and as a guide there are generally four buses per hour into the city centre.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION – YOUR RIGHTS. The press and public have the right to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. You have:

- the right to attend all Authority and Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose “confidential information” or “exempt information”;
- the right to film, record or report electronically on any meeting to which the public are admitted provided you do not do so in a manner that is disruptive to the meeting. **If you are present at a meeting of the Authority you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed or recorded by anyone exercising their rights under this paragraph;**
- the right to inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>);
- the right to inspect minutes of the Authority and Committees for up to six years following the meeting (available on our website: <http://www.hwfire.org.uk>); and
- the right to inspect background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting.

A reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be available at meetings of the Authority and Committees. If you have any queries regarding this agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of these rights of access to information please contact Committee & Members’ Services on 01905 368209 or by email at committeeservices@hwfire.org.uk.

WELCOME AND GUIDE TO TODAY’S MEETING. These notes are written to assist you to follow the meeting. Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are democratically elected representatives and they will be advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals. The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 25 Councillors and appoints committees to undertake various functions on behalf of the Authority. There are 19 Worcestershire County Councillors on the Authority and 6 Herefordshire Council Councillors.

Agenda Papers - Attached is the Agenda which is a summary of the issues to be discussed and the related reports by Officers.

Chairman - The Chairman, who is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting, sits at the head of the table.

Officers - Accompanying the Chairman is the Chief Fire Officer and other Officers of the Fire and Rescue Authority who will advise on legal and procedural matters and record the proceedings. These include the Clerk and the Treasurer to the Authority.

The Business - The Chairman will conduct the business of the meeting. The items listed on the agenda will be discussed.

Decisions - At the end of the discussion on each item the Chairman will put any amendments or motions to the meeting and then ask the Councillors to vote. The Officers do not have a vote.



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Tuesday, 30 July 2019, 14:00

Agenda

Councillors

Mr M Hart (Chairman), Mr A Amos (Vice Chairman), Ms P Agar, Mr S Bowen, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mrs K Hey, Mr R J Morris, Dr K Pollock, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee

| No. | Item | Pages |
|-----|---|--------|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence. | |
| 2 | Named Substitutes To receive details of any Member of the Authority nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee. | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest (if any) This item allows the Chairman to invite any Councillor to declare an interest in any of the items on this Agenda. | |
| 4 | Confirmation of Minutes To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2019. | 7 - 12 |
| 5 | Statement of Accounts 2018/19 Details | |

6 External Audit Findings Report 2018/19

To put forward the External Auditors' Report for consideration and to recommend approval of the Letter of Representation.

7 External Audit Fee 2019/20

Details

8 Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/19

Details

9 Internal Audit Progress Report 2018/19 and 2019/20

To provide the Committee with a progress update on the residual 2018/19 audit plan delivery and progress to date on 2019/20.

10 Internal Audit External Assessment

Details

11 National Fraud Initiative 2018/19

To provide assurance to Members that the Authority's approach to the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) 2018-19 has been thorough and that no fraud has been detected.

12 Strategic Risk Register Review

Details

13 Organisational Development and Challenge Group Update and People Strategy 2017 – 2020 - Progress Update

To provide an update on the Organisational Development and Challenge Group, including People Strategy progress in relation to equality and diversity.

14 Health and Safety Committee Update

Details



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 24 April 2019, 10:30

Chairman: Cllr M Hart

Vice-Chairman: Cllr A Amos

Minutes

Members Present: Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Dr K Pollock, Professor J W Raine

120 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr M Hart and Ms K Guthrie.

121 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

122 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

123 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 22 January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

124 External Audit Plan 2019/20 (2018/19 Accounts)

The External Auditor presented Members with the Audit Plan that sets out the work that will be undertaken during the audit of the 2018/19 Accounts.

Members noted that the Authority faces significant financial challenges ahead, in particular with regard to pensions.

[Cllr Hardman entered the meeting at 10.38am)

RESOLVED that the External Audit Plan 2019/20 (2018/19 Accounts) be noted.

125 External Audit Progress Report 2018-19

The External Auditor presented Members with an Audit Progress report and Sector update which updated them on the progress in delivering their responsibilities as external auditors.

Members were pleased to note that the Fire Service has a 'clean bill of health'.

RESOLVED that the External Auditor's "Audit Progress report and Sector Update" be noted.

126 Informing the Audit Risk Assessment 2018-19 Accounts

The External Auditor presented Members with the Audit Risk Assessment carried out by Grant Thornton UK LLP in deriving the External Audit Plan 2019/20 in respect of the 2018/19 Accounts.

Members felt reassured and thanked Grant Thornton for the work they had done.

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

127 Internal Audit Progress Report 2018/19

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with a progress update on the 2018/19 audit plan delivery.

Members were assured that there were no high priorities or risks to report and that recommendations made in regards to the reports produced throughout the year were being addressed through robust management action plans and in a timely manner.

Members were advised that a 'light touch audit' in future would provide a better coverage in less time. The Treasurer agreed that a 3 year cycle would enable a full audit of each area over the 3 years.

Members were pleased to note that the previous Gartan issues relating to payroll had been resolved.

The Head of Internal Audit confirmed that the Authority had good control which was helped by working closely with the management team.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

128 Internal Audit Draft Audit Plan 2019/20

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with the Draft Audit Plan for 2019/20.

Members noted that the Audit Plan had been agreed by the Treasurer and considered by the Senior Management Board in March and feedback had been included in the Plan.

RESOLVED that the 2019/20 Draft Internal Audit Plan be approved.

129 Annual Compliments, Complaints, Concerns and Requests for Information 2018/19

Members were presented with details of compliments, complaints, concerns and requests for information made by the public to the Service over the past 12 months.

Members were reassured that officers were satisfied that there were no significant levels of recurring themes or trends in the concerns and complaints being reported to give any cause for concern.

Members requested that any suggestions for improvements following the investigation of the complaint/concern be reported to future meetings.

Members were pleased to note that the Service received three times the amount of compliments than complaints/concerns.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes that during the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019:

- i) a total of 290 requests for information about the Service were received;**
- ii) a total of 102 compliments and donations were received from the public;**
- iii) 33 complaints about Service activities were made; and**
- iv) 20 complaints or concerns were received about activities carried out by other organisations or individuals.**

v) None of the complainants appealed the response provided and no complaints were passed to the Local Government Ombudsman for investigation.

130 Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

Members were presented with the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 for approval.

Members noted from the self assessment that the Authority had provided evidence of compliance with all the core and supporting principles of good governance. There were no areas where immediate action was required.

Members also noted that there were two areas (shown within Core Principles A and F) where the direction of travel improved during 2018/19. This was due to the review of the Whistleblowing Policy which was to be considered elsewhere on the agenda and the commencement of the Review of Financial Regulations.

Members were reminded that the Committee had delegated responsibility to approve the Annual Governance Statement which would accompany the Statement of Accounts. The Annual Governance Statement would also be published alongside the unaudited statement of accounts at the beginning of the period for public inspection, commencing in early June.

Members thanked officers for the excellent work.

RESOLVED that the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 be approved.

131 National Fraud Initiative 2018/19

The Treasurer updated Members on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI).

Members were assured that a final report would be brought to the next Audit and Standards Committee to provide final details in relation to creditor matching reports and any new reports published in the interim.

The Treasurer was pleased to inform Members that there had been no fraud for the past 7 years.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes the process of examining all National Fraud Initiative matches is underway and that no fraud has been detected in relation to the completed review of employee matches.

132 Review of the Whistleblowing Policy

Members were presented with the Authority's Revised Whistleblowing Policy, which had recently been reviewed and updated.

Members were reminded that the Policy was designed for staff, contractors and the public to feel able to report any concerns they may have about improper conduct and to be confident their concerns would be investigated without fear of reprisal.

RESOLVED that the revised Whistleblowing Policy be noted.

133 Gender Pay Gap Report

Members were presented with data detailing the gender pay gap in the Service. Members were also informed that the data was published on the Service's website and the government's reporting website annually in accordance with legal requirements.

Members were made aware that this report was only for the Gender Pay Gap and not the Equal Pay Audit which measures whether men and women in the same employment performing equal work receive equal pay.

Officers were pleased to announce that a number of female candidates had been successful at the recent crew commander process and that the first female operational station commander had just taken up her role within the Service.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The gender pay gap figures be noted;**
- ii) Progress to bridge the gender pay gap be monitored via the Senior Management Board (SMB); and**
- iii) It be noted that the Gender Pay Gap Report was published on the corporate website and government's reporting website and includes a signed statement confirming the information was accurate.**

134 Health and Safety Committee Update

Members were presented with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

A Member was concerned about decontamination facilities at fire stations. They were assured that all firefighting PPE was laundered by an outside company.

Members thanked officers for the excellent report.

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

- i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during October to December 2018 (Quarter 3);**
- ii) The involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives.**

To close the meeting, the Chairman expressed how pleased he was with the audit, maintenance and the general running of the Authority and thanked officers.

The Meeting ended at: 11:27

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman