



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 29 July 2020, 10:30

Chairman: Mr M Hart

Vice-Chairman: Mr A Amos

Minutes

Members Present: Ms P Agar, Mr A Amos, Mr S Bowen, Mrs E Eyre BEM, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr M Hart, Mr R J Morris, Dr K Pollock, Mr L Stark, Mrs D Toynbee

167 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs K Hey.

168 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

169 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no interests declared.

170 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 22 January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

171 Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented Members with the Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20.

Members were advised that the Internal Audit Charter provided Members with information on how the internal audit to the Fire Authority was

delivered and what could be expected as work progressed throughout the year. Members were assured that overall the report confirmed a very sound position in regard to 19/20 and the expectation would continue through to 20/21 even considering the events that were currently being dealt with.

[Cllr Agar and Cllr Bowen entered the meeting at 10.41am].

Members were also advised that the audit plan delivered in 2019/20 provided an assurance level of "full" for two core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations.

A Member queried how the findings of the consultancy review was reported to Members. The Head of Internal Audit clarified that the findings were contained in an overview report. Challenges are raised with the particular team and they seek to ensure the challenges are picked up as part of the implementation which ensures the value for money aspect is achieved.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Internal Audit Charter and that the audit plan delivered in 2019/20 provided an assurance level of "full" for two core financial areas and that no limited or below assurance areas had been reported or any high priority recommendations.

172 Internal Audit Progress Report 2019/20 & 2020/21

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service updated Members on the delivery of the Internal Audit Plans for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Members were informed that the Internal Audit Plan for 2019/20 had progressed steadily throughout the financial year with 2 remaining reviews to finalise. Members had also been informed that Business Continuity had been deferred.

With regard to 2020/21, the Internal Audit Plan would continue on a priority basis agreed by the Treasurer but would not be completed in full and there would be a requirement to roll over certain reviews to the next financial year on a risk basis.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

173 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025

The Head of Community Risk and HR & Development presented the

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025 to outline the proposed areas of focus.

Members were informed that the Plan enables the Service to articulate its equality objectives and aspirations, meet its legal duties and address areas for improvement.

Members were pleased to note that two Champions had recently been elected, Cllr Oborski and Cllr Baker Price, who would be attending quarterly meetings and update reports against the Plan would be brought to this Committee on a 6 monthly basis.

A Member expressed her concerns with the use of the term 'sex' rather than 'gender' and it was agreed that this would be amended throughout the Plan.

RESOLVED that the Authority:

i) considered the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025 and noted the proposed areas of focus.

ii) amended the term 'sex' to 'gender' throughout the Plan prior to publication.

174 Strategic Risk Register – Annual Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented Members with an annual update on the Strategic Risk Register.

Members were informed that the Strategic Risk Register and Departmental Risk Registers were a method for continual monitoring and reviewing the Service's risks by the Senior Management Board and middle managers informing the Service's objectives and business goals over time.

Members were reminded that this process had been in place since 2017 with a routine review due in 2020, however this had been postponed due to the department being completely involved in Covid planning.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

175 Organisational Development and Challenge Group Update and People Strategy 2020 – 2022 - Progress Update

The Head of Human Resources & Development updated Members on the Organisational Development and Challenge Group, including People

Strategy progress in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

A Member queried whether the role of the OCDG had an input to judge progression. Members were assured that there were a number of work streams, including 'Women@HWFire', that were used for their knowledge and experience to influence the role going forward. The OCDG group could also be directed to look into specific areas. Members were extremely pleased to note that there was no hierarchy for this group.

RESOLVED that the following areas of progress were noted:

i) The Organisational Development and Challenge Group continues to act as a critical friend with regards to cultural change;

ii) The People Strategy 2020-2022 was approved and is now live on the Service website;

iii) An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer was appointed and a Positive Action Plan was approved to help increase the Service's workforce diversity;

iv) Two FRA Champions for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were appointed; and

v) People Strategy objectives to be met by the HR & Development team have been mapped into a People Delivery Plan, which also encompasses HMICFRS recommendations.

176 Health and Safety Committee Update

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

Members were provided with an overview of the arrangements for managing Covid. Members were pleased to note that in total the Service has had approximately 44 employees tested for Covid, 37 tests were negative, 6 were confirmed and 1 was awaiting results. Members thanked the Service for their efforts in supporting Covid.

Members were also advised of the ongoing issue with regards to Droitwich Fire Station where appliances respond straight onto the Saltway on a sweeping bend and for many years there has been concern of having to pull out on a hazardous piece of road. Traffic calming measures implemented previously were not sufficient and the Service were now working with PPL and considering options following receipt of a report from Highways consultants.

RESOLVED that the following issues, in particular be noted:

i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during January to March 2020 (Quarter 4); and

ii) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives.

The Meeting ended at: 12:15

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman