



HEREFORD & WORCESTER Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

AGENDA

Wednesday, 24 January 2018

10:30

Conference Suites

**Headquarters, 2 Kings Court, Charles Hastings Way,
Worcester, WR5 1JR**

ACTION ON DISCOVERING A FIRE

- 1 Break the glass at the nearest **FIRE ALARM POINT**.
(This will alert Control and other Personnel)
- 2 Tackle the fire with the appliances available – **IF SAFE TO DO SO**.
- 3 Proceed to the Assembly Point for a Roll Call –

CAR PARK OF THE OFFICE BUILDING ADJACENT TO THE CYCLE SHED TO THE LEFT OF THE ENTRANCE BARRIER TO 2 KINGS COURT.

- 4 Never re-enter the building – **GET OUT STAY OUT**.

ACTION ON HEARING THE ALARM

- 1 Proceed immediately to the Assembly Point

CAR PARK OF THE OFFICE BUILDING ADJACENT TO THE CYCLE SHED TO THE LEFT OF THE ENTRANCE BARRIER TO 2 KINGS COURT.

- 2 Close all doors en route. The senior person present will ensure all personnel have left the room.
- 3 Never re-enter the building – **GET OUT STAY OUT**.

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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
HWR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

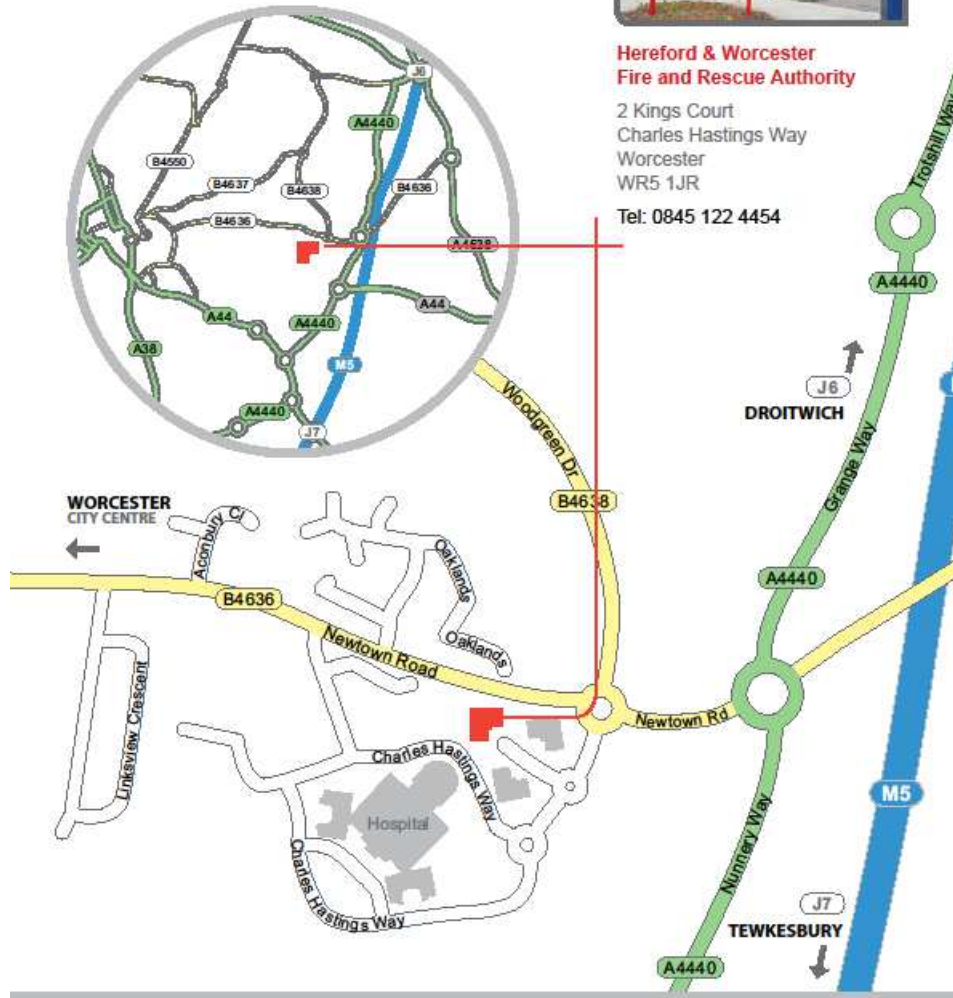
Service Headquarters



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Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 24 January 2018, 10:30

Agenda

Councillors

Mr M Hart (Chairman), Mr A Amos (Vice Chairman), Ms P Agar, Ms K S Guthrie, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr Al Hardman, Mr J L V Kenyon, Mr R I Matthews, Mr P Middlebrough, Dr K Pollock, Professor J W Raine, Mr S D Williams

| 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 06.09.2017. | 7 - 13 |
| 5 | Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 To present the Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 from External Auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP. | 14 - 27 |

| | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| 6 | Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2017/18 | 28 - 38 |
| | To provide the Committee with a progress update on the 2017/18 audit plan delivery. | |
| 7 | Gender Pay Gap Report | 39 - 49 |
| | To provide details of the gender pay gap in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service prior to the publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report on the corporate website and government's reporting website. | |
| 8 | Update from the Health and Safety Committee | 50 - 58 |
| | To provide the Audit and Standards Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee. | |



Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

Wednesday, 06 September 2017,09:30

Minutes

Members Present: Ms P Agar, Mr I D Hardiman, Mr M Hart, Dr K Pollock, Professor J W Raine

75 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr A Amos, Ms K Guthrie, Mr R Matthews, Mr P Middlebrough, Mr S Williams.

76 Named Substitutes

There were no named substitutes.

77 Declarations of Interest (if any)

There were no declarations of interests.

78 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Standard Committee held on 12 April 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79 Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17

Members were given a summary of the governance arrangements for 2016/17 and advised that procedures followed the same format as previous years. The Committee were informed that the annual self-assessment review noted evidence of compliance with all core and supporting principles of good governance with no areas for immediate action. It was noted that two minor actions were scheduled for work in 2017/18 as the review of some documents and arrangements in Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for Regulation of Contracts had yet to

be completed.

RESOLVED that the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17 be approved.

80 Approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts 2016/17

The Treasurer presented the Statement of Accounts 2016/17 to the Committee and noted that there were three amendments to the Draft Accounts covering the following;

Pg. 101 of Agenda 14. Senior Officers: Additional Final Sentence

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive costs are only included for part of the financial year, this is because until 31 July 2016 he was employed by Oxfordshire County Council and seconded to Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority. The Authority made payment of £57,159 to Oxfordshire County Council for the services received.

Pg. 132 of Agenda 124. Events after the Reporting Period: Additional Disclosure

As part of the triennial revaluation of the Worcestershire Pension Fund (LGPS), the Fire Authority has a liability to make lump sum contributions; to cover the previous deficit relating to prior years; in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20, totalling £960k. In April 2017 the Authority paid the 2017/18 liability and prepaid the liabilities for 2018/19 and 2019/20 to secure a discount of £60k in the total liability.

Pg. 134 of Agenda Firefighters' Pension Fund Statement of Net Assets

Correction to 31 March 2017 top up grant and amounts due to General Fund.

The following balances in the table below are held in relation to the Pensions Fund.

| | 31-Mar-16 | 31-Mar-17 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | £000 | £000 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Debtors | | |
| Employer Contributions Due | 116 | 107 |
| Employee Contributions Due | 100 | 96 |
| Top Up receivable from the government | 234 | 2,504 |
| Prepayments | | |
| Pensions paid in advance | 996 | 583 |
| Creditors | | |
| Unpaid Pension Benefits | (40) | (21) |
| Amounts due to General Fund | (1,406) | (3,269) |
| | 0 | 0 |

The Treasurer confirmed that the accounts had been signed off on 26 May 2017 a month ahead of the new deadline that will apply from next year onwards and that there were no significant issues arising from the completed audit. The Treasurer highlighted that although the accounts showed a significant deficit this had arisen from the identified liabilities in the pension schemes and confirmed that the Authority was not required to fund the negative balance as it would be met by direct government grants. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that as a consequence of the new Account and Audit Regulations 2015 and the changing deadlines for account sign off and publish it will be necessary to make changes to the established timetable for the Committee from 2018 onwards.

Following consideration of the External Audit Findings Report (below) it was **RESOLVED the Statement of Accounts 2016/17 be approved.**

81 External Audit Findings Report 2016/17

The External Auditor confirmed that working papers received by officers were good quality reports and in line with the agreed timetable. 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 weakness' to be brought to the attention of the committee and that no adjustments affecting the Authority's reported financial position were required.

There were no issues relating to findings against significant risks and the auditors were happy with the identified conclusions. With regards to the Medium Term Financial Plan it was noted that good plans were in place to address the deficit. It was recognised that despite risks with some longer term schemes involving external partners the arrangements that were in place were sustainable, focused and what the auditors expect to see.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the External Audit Findings Report 2016/17 including an unqualified opinion on the 2016/17 accounts be noted; and**
- ii) the letter of representation be approved on behalf of the Authority.**

82 External Audit: Future Plans

The External Auditors confirmed that the Authority's scale fee for 2017/18 remained unchanged from the previous year and that no additional charges were required.

The Treasurer reminded Members of the revised arrangements for the appointment of external auditors from 2018/19 and confirmed that the Authority had received notification from Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. appointing Grant Thornton UK LLP as auditors for five years commencing with the 2018/19 audit.

[9:55 Cllr Pat Agar entered the room]

RESLOVED that the Committee note:

- i) The External Audit Fee 2017/18 from Grant Thornton UK LLP; and**
- ii) The appointment of Grant Thornton UK LLP as Auditors for 2018/19 onwards.**

83 Annual Statement of Assurance 2017-18

It was highlighted to Members that this was the fifth Statement of Assurance that the Authority had produced and was designed to give

staff, partners and members of the public assurance that the Authority does everything it can to keep them safe as well as providing value for money. Members attention was drawn to the fact that the document was a summary covering three areas of governance, finance and frontline response, signposting readers to information that was already publically available.

RESOLVED that the Draft Statement of Assurance be adopted and approved for publication.

84 Internal Audit Annual Report 2016/17

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 2016/17. The audit opinion and commentary on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment concluded that arrangements for 2016/17 had managed the principle risks effectively and could be relied upon to meet corporate objectives. Full to moderate assurances were given in relation to all but two of the twelve areas reviewed. These outstanding issues in Safeguarding and the CARE Scheme were being addressed as part of the process of continuous improvement and clear management actions had been agreed.

RESLOVED that:

- i) the audit plan delivered in 2016/17 provided an assurance level of full for the core financial areas and identified two key areas for improvement be noted; and**
- ii) the internal Audit Charter be approved.**

85 Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2017/18

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service presented a report detailing progress on the 2017/18 audit plan and the residual work from the 2016/17 plan. Members were informed that although the residual work reported four high priority recommendations arising with potential risks in safeguarding and the CARE system these were already being addressed through robust management action plans. It was confirmed that work for 2017/18 would continue to progress steadily throughout the year and the Committee would be kept up to date with findings.

RESLOVED that the Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2017/18 be noted.

86 Organisational Development - Equality and Diversity Review

Members were advised that the Service was on a conscious journey to improve equality and diversity practices. Members were informed of the findings and recommendations following a review carried out by The Wisdom Factory CIC on behalf of the Services Organisational Development Group. The review identified twenty four recommendations. It was noted that one of the key actions identified was the development of an Equality and Inclusion Strategy with measurable and achievable objectives that would produce an action plan to discharge the recommendations and be overseen and monitored by the Organisational Development Group.

Cllr Agar expressed concern that the report referred only to LGB rather than LGBT. Officers agreed that this would be a consideration in future documents.

***RESOLVED* that:**

- i) the findings and recommendations set out in the Equality and Diversity Review be welcomed and incorporated within an action plan being developed as part of the forthcoming People Strategy; and**
- ii) the action plan include an Equality and Inclusion Strategy which be brought back to Audit and Standards Committee for approval as soon as possible.**

87 Employment Monitoring Data 2016-17

Members were presented with a summary of progress against the Public Sector Equality Duty prior to the publication of the Employment Monitoring Data 2016/17. The data covered six main areas and the report went hand in hand with the Equality and Diversity review and the work of the Organisational Development Group.

***RESOLVED* that:**

- i) it be noted that there have been minimal changes to the overall make up of the Services workforce since the previous employment monitoring report for 2015-2016.**
- ii) it be noted the inclusion of data in relation to unsuccessful completion of the fitness test has been included within the Case Work section of the Employment Monitoring Report 2016-2017.**

iii) The Employment Monitoring Report 2016-2017 be approved for publication.

88 Health and Safety Committee Update

The key aim of the Health and Safety (H&S) Committee was to establish a forum to provide robust arrangements to review health and safety matters taking into account local, regional and national activity. It was confirmed that Councillor Brandon Clayton sat on the H&S Committee which had the ability to task a working group as and when required. Members were informed that currently the working group were midway through a review of organisational road risk and findings would be brought back to Audit and Standards Committee in due course.

RESOLVED that the

(i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during January 2017 to June 2017 (Quarter 4 2016/17 & Quarter 1 2017/18) be noted.

(ii) involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives be noted.

The Meeting ended at: 10:57

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Report of the Treasurer

Annual Audit Letter 2016/17

Purpose of report

1. To present the Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 from External Auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP.

Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends that the Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 from External Auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP be noted.

Introduction and Background

2. Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 the Auditors key responsibilities are to :
 - give an opinion on the Authority's financial statements;
 - assess the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the value for money conclusion).
3. The Auditors undertake a risk assessment to identify any significant risks which need to be addressed before the value for money conclusion is reached. The Auditors assess the Authority's financial resilience as part of their work on the value for money conclusion.
4. The Annual Audit Letter summarises the findings from the 2016/17 audit.

Overview

5. The key messages in the Audit 2016/17 are as follows:
 - the financial statements were prepared by early June, which places the Authority in a good position to meet the end of May deadline next year;
 - the audit went well and detailed testing was completed as planned;
 - officers were responsive to our questions and adopted a positive attitude throughout the audit;
 - financial risks are sufficiently mitigated and the Authority has proper arrangements for ensuring sustainable resource deployment.

Audit Opinion

6. An unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2016/17 financial statements was issued on 6 September 2017. The financial statements were considered to give a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position and that the financial statements presented for audit were basically sound.
7. No significant issues were found with the primary statements in our 2016/17 audit. The Auditors and officers will discuss further efficiencies in the audit process to meet the end of July deadline for next year.
8. The Engagement Lead issued an unqualified Value for Money Conclusion on 6 September 2017 as work did not identify any matters which indicated that the Authority did not have proper arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
9. The Engagement Lead was satisfied on the basis of his work that in all significant respects Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Corporate Considerations

| | |
|---|------|
| Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues) | None |
| Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications). | None |
| Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores). | None |
| Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter) | None |
| Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?) | N/A |

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Annual Audit Letter 2016-17 from the External Auditors, Grant Thornton
UK LLP

Contact Officer

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(01905 368205)

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The Annual Audit Letter for Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Year ended 31 March 2017

October 2017

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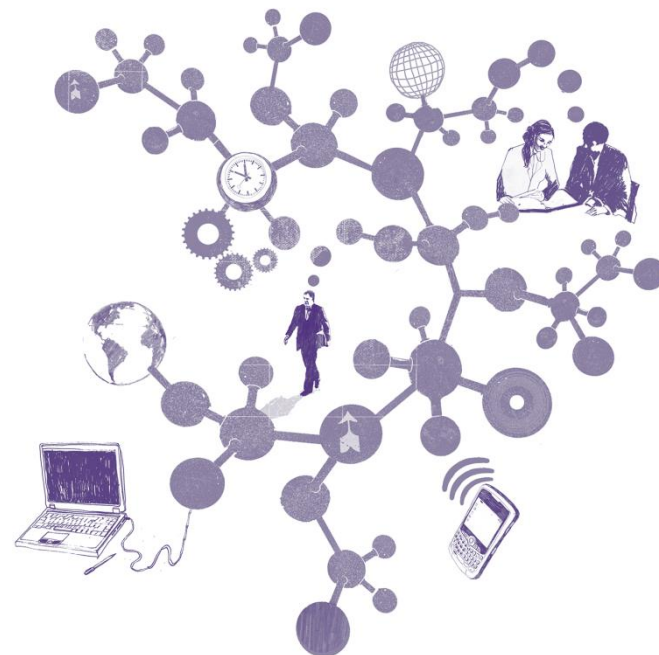
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Executive summary

Purpose of this letter

Our Annual Audit Letter (Letter) summarises the key findings arising from the work we have carried out at Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority (the Authority) for the year ended 31 March 2017.

This Letter provides a commentary on the results of our work to the Authority and its external stakeholders, and highlights issues we wish to draw to the attention of the public. In preparing this letter, we have followed the National Audit Office (NAO)'s Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 07 – 'Auditor Reporting'.

We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to the Authority's Audit & Standards Committee (as those charged with governance) in our Audit Findings Report on 6 September 2017.

Our responsibilities

We have carried out our audit in accordance with the NAO's Code of Audit Practice, which reflects the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act). Our key responsibilities are to:

- give an opinion on the Authority's financial statements (section two)
- assess the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the value for money conclusion) (section three).

In our audit of the Authority's financial statements, we comply with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) (ISAs) and other guidance issued by the NAO.

Our work

Financial statements opinion

We gave an unqualified opinion on the Authority's financial statements on 6 September 2017. The deadline for 2018 onwards is 31 July, so further improvements in timeliness will be required. We will discuss how best to achieve this with Officers.

Value for money conclusion

We were satisfied that the Authority put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources during the year ended 31 March 2017. We reflected this in our audit opinion on 6 September 2017.

Certificate

We certified that we had completed the audit of the accounts of Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority in accordance with the requirements of the Code on 6 September 2017.

Working with the Authority

An efficient audit – we delivered the accounts audit before the deadline and in line with the timescale we agreed with you. Our audit team are knowledgeable and experienced in your financial accounts and systems. Our relationship with your team provides you with a financial statements audit that continues to finish ahead of schedule releasing your finance team for other important work. We will build on this in 2017/18, with the aim of completing your audit by the end of July, which is the new deadline.

Understanding your operational health – through the value for money conclusion we provided you with assurance on your Medium Term Financial Plan. We highlighted the need for detailed long terms plans to address the residual deficit. In the long term, use of reserves to achieve breakeven is not sustainable and the Authority needs to consider how to get to a recurrent breakeven budget over time.

Providing training – we provided your finance team with training on financial accounts.

We would like to record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us during our audit by the Authority's staff.

Grant Thornton UK LLP
October 2017

Audit of the accounts

Our audit approach

Materiality

In our audit of the Authority's accounts, we applied the concept of materiality to determine the nature, timing and extent of our work, and to evaluate the results of our work. We define materiality as the size of the misstatement in the financial statements that would lead a reasonably knowledgeable person to change or influence their economic decisions.

We determined materiality for our audit of the Authority's accounts to be £717,000, which is 2% of the Authority's gross revenue expenditure from the previous year. We used this benchmark, as in our view, users of the Authority's accounts are most interested in how it has spent the income it has raised from taxation and grants during the year.

We also set a lower level of specific materiality for related party transactions and Disclosures of officers' remuneration, salary bandings and exit packages. We set a lower threshold of £20,000, above which we reported errors to the Audit & Standards Committee in our Audit Findings Report.

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The scope of our audit

Our audit involves obtaining enough evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements to give reasonable assurance they are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes assessing whether:

- the Authority's accounting policies are appropriate, have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- significant accounting estimates made by the Director of Finance & Assets (Treasurer) are reasonable; and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements gives a true and fair view.

We also read the narrative report and annual governance statement to check they are consistent with our understanding of the Authority and with the accounts included in the Statement of Accounts on which we gave our opinion.

We carry out our audit in line with ISAs (UK and Ireland) and the NAO Code of Audit Practice. We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Authority's business and is risk based.

We identified key risks and set out overleaf the work we performed in response to these risks and the results of this work.

Audit of the accounts

These are the risks which had the greatest impact on our overall strategy and where we focused more of our work.

| Risks identified in our audit plan | How we responded to the risk | Findings and conclusions |
|--|--|--|
| Valuation of pension fund net liability The Authority's pension fund asset and liability as reflected in its balance sheet represent a significant estimate in the financial statements. | To address this risk we: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identified the controls put in place by management to ensure that the pension fund liability was not materially misstated.• assessed whether these controls were implemented as expected and whether they were sufficient to mitigate the risk of material misstatement.• reviewed the competence, expertise and objectivity of the actuary who carried out your pension fund valuation.• gained an understanding of the basis on which the valuation was carried out.• undertook procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made.• reviewed the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in notes to the financial statements with the actuarial report from your actuary.• obtained assurance from the external auditor of the Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund (WCCPF) regarding the relevant controls and processes in place at the WMPF in order that we could rely on the outputs from the WCCPF. | Our audit work did not identify any significant issues in relation to the risk identified. |

Audit of the accounts

Audit opinion

We gave an unqualified opinion on the Authority's accounts on 6 September 2017, in advance of the 30 September 2017 national deadline.

The Authority made the accounts available for audit in line with the agreed timetable, and provided a good set of supporting working papers. The finance team responded promptly and efficiently to our queries during the audit.

Issues arising from the audit of the accounts

We reported the key issues from our audit of the accounts of the Authority to the Authority's Audit & Standards Committee on 6 September 2017. In addition to the key audit risks reported above, we commented that:

- the financial statements were prepared by early June, which places the Authority in a good position to meet the end of May deadline next year;
- our audit went well and we were able to complete our detailed testing as planned;
- officers were responsive to our questions and adopted a positive attitude throughout the audit;
- we will discuss with officers further efficiencies in the audit process to meet the end of July deadline for next year; and
- we did not identify any significant issues affecting the primary statements.

Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report

We are required to review the Authority's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report. It published them on its website with the draft accounts in line with the national deadlines.

Both documents were prepared in line with the relevant guidance and were consistent with the supporting evidence provided by the Authority and with our knowledge of the Authority.

Value for Money conclusion

Background

We carried out our review in accordance with the NAO Code of Audit Practice (the Code), following the guidance issued by the NAO in November 2016 which specified the criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

Key findings

Our first step in carrying out our work was to perform a risk assessment and identify the key risks where we concentrated our work.

The key risks we identified and the work we performed are set out in table 2 overleaf.

Overall VfM conclusion

We are satisfied that in all significant respects the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Value for Money

Table 2: Value for money risks

| Risk identified | Work carried out | Findings and conclusions |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) The Authority approved a four year MTFP in February 2017. This identified a total deficit over the four years to 2020/21 of £1,750k.</p> <p>The Authority is planning to use reserves to smooth this over the four year period. This would still leave £1,430k in the reserve. In the long term, use of reserves to achieve breakeven is not sustainable and the Authority is working on some longer term schemes to get a recurrent budget over time.</p> | <p>To address this risk we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examined the savings plans and efficiencies in the MTFP which have been identified to achieve the forecasts; tested a sample of these to ensure they are robust and realistic; and looked at the plans to address the residual shortfall and how well these have been worked up to ensure they also are realistic and achievable. | <p>The Authority has forecast that it will be able to set a balanced budget, through the use of an earmarked reserve specifically for the purpose, for the next five financial years, even if no action is taken to make further efficiencies. We noted that the majority of the projects in place to address the underlying deficit are well worked through and realistic. It is therefore possible that the reserve will not be required in full, as savings start to materialise.</p> <p>The cost of running with "Excess Staff" is reducing - in 2018/19 the estimated cost is £589k, but this falls to £96k in 2019/20. The Budget Reduction Reserve will be used to cover the cost. As at 31 March 2017 this reserve had a balance of £3,063k.</p> <p>The MTFP reports budget surplus or deficits as: 2017/18 = £753k surplus; 2018/19 = £251k surplus; 2019/20 = £1,201k deficit; 2020/21 = £1,553k deficit. Giving a total over the MTFP of £1,750k deficit.</p> <p>This shortfall will be covered by the Budget Reduction Reserve, and the Authority has longer terms schemes in place which it considers will address the ongoing forecast deficit. However, there are risks associated with some of the schemes. In particular, the Wyre Forest Blue Light Hub is not within the Authority's control and is still not in a position to proceed. Similarly, the crewing savings depend on firefighters volunteering for a different work pattern and the changes are being consulted upon. The timescale for this scheme may be optimistic.</p> <p>On the basis of the Fire Authority plans and its current reserves, we have concluded that the financial risks are sufficiently mitigated and the Authority has proper arrangements for ensuring sustainable resource deployment.</p> |

Appendix A: Reports issued and fees

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and confirm there were no fees for the provision of non audit services.

Fees

| | Proposed fee £ | Actual fees £ | 2015/16 fees £ |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Statutory audit of Authority | 32,872 | 32,872 | 32,872 |
| Total fees (excluding VAT) | 32,872 | 32,872 | 32,872 |

The proposed fees for the year were in line with the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)

Fees for other services

| Service | Fees £ |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Audit related services: | |
| None | Nil |
| Non-audit services: | |
| None | Nil |

Reports issued

| Report | Date issued |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Audit Plan | March 2017 |
| Audit Findings Report | August 2017 |
| Annual Audit Letter | October 2017 |



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Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority

Audit and Standards Committee

24th January 2018

Report of the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service

Internal Audit Monitoring Report 2017/18

Purpose of report

To provide the Committee with a progress update on the 2017/18 audit plan delivery.

Recommendation

The Treasurer recommends that the report is noted.

Introduction and Background

1. The Authority is responsible for maintaining or procuring an adequate and effective internal audit of the activities of the Authority under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. This includes considering, where appropriate, the need for controls to prevent and detect fraudulent activity. These should also be reviewed to ensure that they are effective. This duty has been delegated to the Treasurer and Internal Audit is provided by Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service (WIASS). Management is responsible for the system of internal control and should set in place policies and procedures to ensure that the system is functioning correctly.

Objectives of Internal Audit

2. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2013 defines internal audit as: “an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes”. WIASS is committed to conforming to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Aims of Internal Audit

3. The objectives of WIASS are to:
 - Examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control and risk management across the Fire Service and recommend arrangements to address weaknesses as appropriate;

- Examine, evaluate and report on arrangements to ensure compliance with legislation and the Fire Service's objectives, policies and procedures;
 - Examine, evaluate and report on procedures that the Fire Service's assets and interests are adequately protected and effectively managed;
 - Undertake independent investigations into allegations of fraud and irregularity in accordance with Fire Service's policies and procedures and relevant legislation; and
 - Advise upon the control and risk implications of new systems or other organisational changes.
4. Internal audit has worked with external audit to try and avoid duplication of effort, provide adequate coverage for the 2017/18 financial year so that an internal audit opinion can be reached and support External Audit by carrying out reviews in support of the accounts opinion work.

Audit Planning

5. To provide audit coverage for 2017/18, an audit operational programme to be delivered by WIASS was discussed and agreed with the Authority's Section 151 Officer and Treasurer as well as Senior Management Board and was brought before Committee on 12th April 2017 for consideration. The audit programme provides a total audit provision of 111 audit days; 95 operational and 16 management days.

Audit Delivery

6. 2017/18 audits commenced after the Committee had agreed the 2017/18 plan at the 12th April 2017 Committee (Appendix 1).
7. To assist the Committee to consider assurance on the areas of work undertaken, an overall assurance level is given, when appropriate, to each audit area based on a predetermined scale (Appendix 3). Also, the findings are prioritised into 'high', 'medium' and 'low' within audit reports with all 'high' priority recommendations being reported before committee (Appendix 2 and 3).

2017/18 Audits:

8. The summary results of these audits are included below. Where recommendations have been made, these are being addressed through management actions.

Corporate Governance (Business Continuity)

The review found the following areas of the system were working well:

- All plans were held electronically and hard copy in appropriate places being accessible to staff;
- All strategic plans have dates set to be reviewed and department's plans are due to be transferred to a new format;
- Good communication to staff of Business Continuity and any roles they are responsible for;
- Critical resources and timescales had been considered within plans;
- Critical service of Fire Control was clearly well prepared and fall-back was part of their working day;
- A strong working relationship with the Local Resilience Forum; and,
- Plans in place to fall in line with Local Resilience Forum.

The review found the following areas of the system where controls could be strengthened:

- Testing and updating of plans

There was one 'medium' priority recommendation reported.

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Audit Type: | Full System Audit |
| Follow Up Report Date: | 16 th August 2017 |
| Original Assurance: | Significant |

Training and Development (baseline and core skill delivery)

The review found the following areas of the system were working well:

- Draft People Strategy linked to business strategies;
- Baseline training requirements for uniformed staff have been identified and included within the Competency Training Record system;
- The Skills for Justice guidance: competencies set has been adopted by the Service;
- Arrangements are in place for the training of drivers under blue lights; and,
- Training statistics are reported to Senior Management Board regularly.

The review found the following areas of the system where controls could be strengthened:

- Monitoring and provision of required core competency refresher training;
- Data variances between the Competency Training Record system and the Gartan system;
- Escalation of non response to training refresher course reminders to enrol; and,
- Recording and monitoring of promoted staff on development.

There were four 'medium' priority recommendations reported.

Audit Type: Full System Audit
Follow Up Report Date: 2nd November 2017
Original Assurance: Moderate

Transformational Planning (Critical Review) 20:20 Board

This critical review found the 2020 Programme Board to be an effective form of challenge for the strategic projects being undertaken by the Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, with regular engagement with responsible officers, and evidence of actions being taken from the challenge process.

Areas of the process that could be improved, particularly in relation to the information provided to the 2020 Programme Board, included quantifying the desirable project targets and objectives and monitoring in accordance with these. This process would be improved with the formal implementation of key stages, including a formal Project Initiation Document or Business Case which clearly sets out what the Board aims to achieve, so that it can measure respective successes and failures. It would also enhance a more focused management challenge during the course of the project by clarifying issues being encountered, assessing them against the original project targets and associated tolerances for change, and quantifying the changes and variations that should be escalated.

The direction of travel is regarded as being positive, in that actions have already been taken to address some of the issues raised in the review, including the preparation of Project Initiation Documents for more recent projects and the formal review of the Evesham Fire Station project, albeit the process would benefit from having this activity formally embedded within all project work.

Three challenges were reported.

Audit Type: Critical Friend
Follow Up Report Date: 22nd September 2017
Original Assurance: N/a

9. Reviews currently at draft report or clearance stage include:
 - Partnership Working - at draft report stage
 - Capital Programme - at clearance stage
10. Other reviews progressing through the fieldwork stage at the time of reporting included:

- Main Ledger - (including budgetary control & Bank Rec) (limited Scope)
- Creditors
- Debtors (limited Scope)

The outcome to the reviews listed above will be reported to Committee in summary form as soon as they are completed.

11. The following 2016/17 review was also finalized since the last Committee is reported in summary form:

ICT

This critical friend review found a number of issues that are to be addressed by management in the implementation of the new strategy for the ICT service. Work on this continues to progress at a steady rate, based on the agreed timeframe for assessing the working arrangements and developing this new ICT strategy, with the overall implementation of project dates being monitored at a senior level. This progressive forward direction of travel must be maintained based on the agreed project target dates in order to achieve corporate objectives.

There is a need to determine the relative suitability of each of the project works identified, including the identification of all associated risks and mitigating controls and actions. The audit work identified the need to consider alternative arrangements, or contingency arrangements should the projects fail or be delayed, albeit this is likely to be identified in the planned risk identification stage.

There is a need to determine whether current working arrangements still suit the requirements of the new developing ICT Strategy, or whether internal management arrangements should be amended to fit the overall purpose going forwards.

12. 'Follow up' is continuing in regard to previously completed audits to provide assurance that recommendations have been implemented and any risk mitigated e.g. safeguarding. Where there is a programmed annual visit to an area the 'follow up' is included as part of the audit review e.g. financials. There are no exceptions to report in regards to 'follow up' findings.

Conclusion/Summary

13. The Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 will continue to progress steadily throughout the forthcoming quarter. Recommendations that have been made are being addressed through robust management action plans.

Corporate Considerations

| | |
|---|---|
| Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues) | There are no financial issues that require consideration. |
| Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications). | Selected audits are risk based and linked to the delivery of priorities and policy framework. |
| Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores). | Yes, whole report. |
| Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter) | N/A – no policy change is recommended |
| Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?) | N/A |

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – 2017/18 Audit Plan summary.

Appendix 2 - 'High' priority recommendations for completed audits.

Appendix 3 – 'Assurance' and 'priority' definitions.

Contact Officer

Andy Bromage

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APPENDIX 1

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN FOR THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 2017/18 WORCESTERSHIRE INTERNAL AUDIT SHARED SERVICE

| Audit Area | Proposed Review | Planned days 2017/18 | Provisional Audit Quarter / Progress |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | |
| Accountancy & Finance Systems | | | |
| Main Ledger (incl. Budgetary Control & Bank Rec) | Limited Scope | 5 | Fieldwork Stage |
| Creditors | Full | 8 | Fieldwork Stage |
| Debtors | Limited Scope | 4 | Fieldwork Stage |
| Payroll & Pensions (incl. GARTAN) | Full | 13 | Fieldwork Stage |
| Capital Programme (Fleet) | Full | 8 | Clearance Stage |
| SUB TOTAL | | 38 | |
| | | | |
| Corporate Governance (incl Health & Safety arrangements) | | | |
| Corporate Governance (Business continuity, resilience & emergency planning) | Full | 9 | Completed 16/08/2017 |
| ICT Audit | Full | 8 | Q4 |
| Risk Management | Limited Scope | 5 | Completed 14/06/2017 |
| | | | |
| System / Management Arrangements | | | |
| Partnership Working (Governance Arrangements) | Full | 6 | Draft Report Stage |
| Training (Baseline & Core skill delivery) | Full | 8 | Completed 02/11/2017 |
| Transformational Planning | Critical Friend | 9 | Completed 22/09/2017 |
| Procurement /Contracts | Full | 8 | Q4 |
| | | | |
| SUB TOTAL | | 53 | |
| | | | |
| General | | | |
| Follow up Reviews | | 7 | Q1 to Q4 inclusive |
| Advice, Guidance, Consultation, Investigations | | 3 | Q1 to Q4 inclusive |
| Audit Cttee Support | | 5 | Q1 to Q4 inclusive |
| Reports & Meetings | | 5 | Q1 to Q4 inclusive |
| SUB TOTAL | | 20 | |
| TOTAL CHARGEABLE | | 111 | |

'High' Priority Recommendations reported (2017/18 Reviews)

There were no 'high' priority recommendations to report from those reviews completed since the last Committee potentially leading to increased risk for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Definition of Priority of Recommendations

| Priority | Definition |
|---------------|---|
| High | Control weakness that has or is likely to have a significant impact upon the achievement of key system, function or process objectives. Immediate implementation of the agreed recommendation is essential in order to provide satisfactory control of the serious risk(s) the system is exposed to. |
| Medium | Control weakness that has or is likely to have a medium impact upon the achievement of key system, function or process objectives. Implementation of the agreed recommendation within 3 to 6 months is important in order to provide satisfactory control of the risk(s) the system is exposed to. |
| Low | Control weakness that has a low impact upon the achievement of key system, function or process objectives. Implementation of the agreed recommendation is desirable as it will improve overall control within the system. |

Definition of Audit Opinion Levels of Assurance

| Opinion | Definition |
|------------------------------|---|
| Full Assurance | <p>The system of internal control meets the organisation's objectives; all of the expected system controls tested are in place and are operating effectively.</p> <p>No specific follow up review will be undertaken; follow up will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p> |
| Significant Assurance | <p>There is a generally sound system of internal control in place designed to meet the organisation's objectives. However isolated weaknesses in the design of controls or inconsistent application of controls in a small number of areas put the achievement of a limited number of system objectives at risk.</p> <p>Follow up of medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p> |
| Moderate Assurance | <p>The system of control is generally sound however some of the expected controls are not in place and / or are not operating effectively therefore increasing the risk that the system will not meet its objectives. Assurance can only be given over the effectiveness of controls within some areas of the system.</p> <p>Follow up of high and medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p> |
| Limited Assurance | <p>Weaknesses in the design and / or inconsistent application of controls put the achievement of the organisation's objectives at risk in many of the areas reviewed. Assurance is limited to the few areas of the system where controls are in place and are operating effectively.</p> <p>Follow up of high and medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p> |
| No Assurance | <p>No assurance can be given on the system of internal control as significant weaknesses in the design and / or operation of key controls could result or have resulted in failure to achieve the organisation's objectives in the area reviewed.</p> <p>Follow up of high and medium priority recommendations only will be undertaken after 6 months; follow up of low priority recommendations will be undertaken as part of the next planned review of the system.</p> |

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Gender Pay Gap Report

Purpose of report

This report details the gender pay gap in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (the Service), prior to the publication of the Gender Pay Gap Report on the corporate website and government's reporting website.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- i) The gender pay gap figures are noted*
- ii) Progress to bridge the gender pay gap is monitored via SMB*
- iii) The attached Gender Pay Gap Report is published on the corporate website and government's reporting website together with a signed statement confirming the information is accurate*

Background

The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 require employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing the pay gap between their male and female employees. ***It is important to note that Gender Pay Gap reporting is different to an Equal Pay Audit which measures whether men and women in the same employment performing equal work receive equal pay.***

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and development of all employees. We are aware that we have work to do to bridge the gender pay gap and we are fully committed to ensuring equal pay between female and male members of staff.

While the gender pay gap regulations for the public, private and voluntary sectors are near identical, and the calculations are directly comparable, the public sector regulations also take into account the public sector equality duty.

By law the six calculations should be published as follows:

- average gender pay gap as a mean average (average value)
- average gender pay gap as a median average (middle value)
- average bonus gender pay gap as a mean average
- average bonus gender pay gap as a median average

- proportion of males receiving a bonus payment and proportion of females receiving a bonus payment
- proportion of males and females when divided into four groups ordered from lowest to highest pay.

The information contained within this report is based on a snapshot of pay on 31 March 2017, and must be published by 4 April 2018 on the corporate website and on the government reporting website. A signed statement that the information is accurate must accompany the results and the results should remain on the websites for at least three years.

Analysis of Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue

Gender pay gap data trends

The mean gender pay gap is 25.8%. This figure is based on a mean male hourly rate of £17.70 and mean female hourly rate of £13.13. The median gender pay gap figure is 23.6%. This is based on a median male hourly pay rate of £17.08 and a median female hourly rate of £13.04. The mean and median gender bonus gap is 0% and it should be noted no staff receive bonus payments.

The pay quartiles indicate that women make up 64.5% of the lower quartiles, 14.6% of the upper middle quartile and 2.9% in the upper quartile.

Causes of gender pay gap trends

Generally the causes of the gender pay gap are complex and can be overlapping. Females often do well at school, but tend to end up concentrated in employment sectors that offer narrower scope for financial reward. On the other hand, many of the highest paying sectors are disproportionately made up of male employees.

One of the challenges that the Service face in bridging our gender pay gap is the current low number of females in uniformed roles, in middle management and in senior management positions. However, it should be noted that the Service has a clear defined career pathway for all uniformed staff and there are examples of female uniformed staff who have been proactively supported in developing their career via gaining specialist skills and promotion. Female support staff who have been proactively supported in developing their career and gaining promotion.

Addressing the gender pay gap trends

There will be defined targets specified in the People Strategy Action Plan 2017-2020 to address the current gender pay gap. This plan will build on current initiatives which are already in place. An important first step will be to conduct an equal pay audit to identify any pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value.

Work will be completed to audit the culture, values and behaviours within the organisation, and intelligence gained from this will inform recruitment, secondment, talent management and continuous development programmes. Furthermore, we will continue to

align our policies and practices to support an open and transparent culture, and further explore family friendly options to continually attract, retain and develop the best people.

Conclusion

The Service will continue to make progress in embedding gender equality and will provide updates to this Committee via the People Strategy Action Plan. The gender pay gap data will be published on the corporate website and the government's reporting website in accordance with legal requirements.

Corporate Considerations

| | |
|--|---|
| Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues) | None |
| Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications). | Supports and enables the People Strategy and underpins the Equality Objectives. |
| Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores). | None |
| Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter) | None |
| Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?) | Not applicable however this report demonstrates commitment to embed the Equality Duty |

Background and Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Gender Pay Gap Report

Contact Officer(s)

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Gender Pay Gap

2017

31 March 2017



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Introduction

Gender pay reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. This report outlines the gender pay gap for Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, and the steps we intend to take to address this.

It should be noted that Gender Pay Gap reporting is different to an Equal Pay Audit which measures whether men and women in the same employment performing equal work receive equal pay.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and development of all employees. We are aware that we have work to do to bridge the gender pay gap and we are fully committed to ensuring equal pay between female and male members of staff.

There is currently one female on my Senior Management Board and I am committed to taking targeted action where appropriate to increase the number of females in the organisation, and in particular, in uniformed roles and management positions. This will be facilitated via the action plan which supports delivery of the People Strategy.

I am keen to ensure that actions arising from this report are well communicated to our staff and I will be encouraging staff feedback and review throughout.



Nathan Travis
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Executive summary

The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce.

Gender pay reporting legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. While the regulations for the public, private and voluntary sectors are near identical, and the calculations are directly comparable, the public sector regulations also take into account the public sector equality duty.

Six calculations are published as follows:

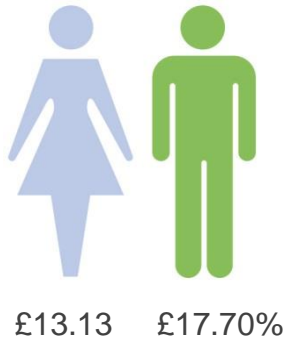
1. average gender pay gap as a mean average (average value)
2. average gender pay gap as a median average (middle value)
3. average bonus gender pay gap as a mean average
4. average bonus gender pay gap as a median average
5. proportion of males receiving a bonus payment and proportion of females receiving a bonus payment
6. proportion of males and females when divided into four groups ordered from lowest to highest pay.

The information contained within this report is based on a snapshot of pay on 31 March 2017.

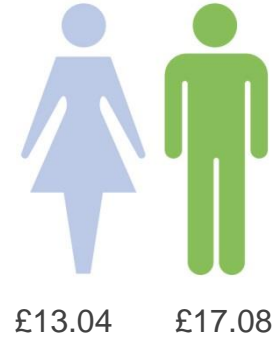
Gender pay gap information

Gender Pay Gap

Mean pay gap 25.8%



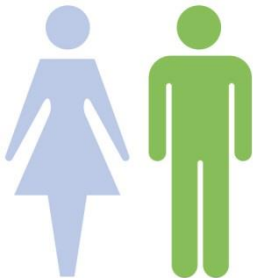
Median pay gap 23.6%



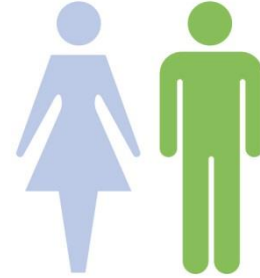
The mean gender pay gap is 25.8%. This figure is based on a mean male hourly rate of £17.70 and mean female hourly rate of £13.13. The median gender pay gap figure is 23.6%. This is based on a median male hourly pay rate of £17.08 and a median female hourly rate of £13.04.

Bonus Pay

Mean pay gap 0%



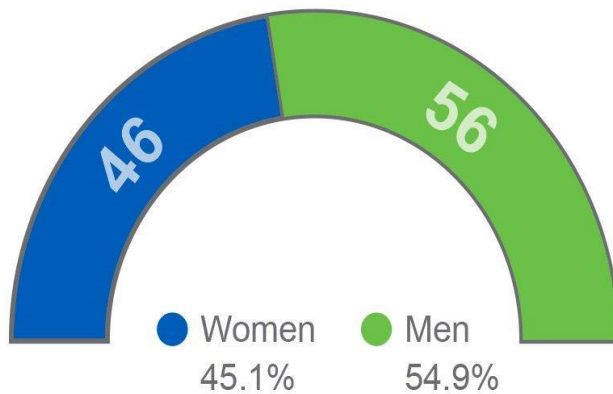
Median pay gap 0%



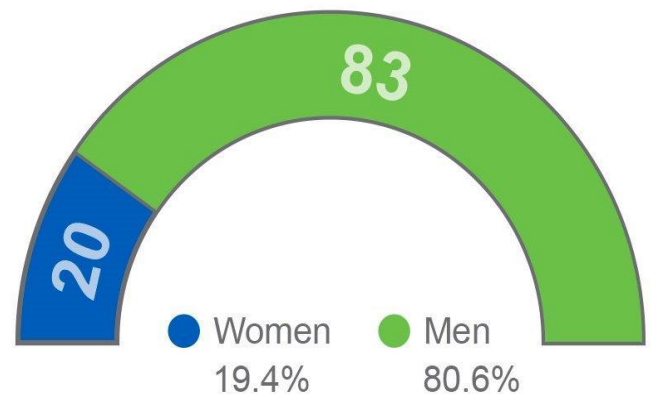
The mean and median gender bonus gap is 0% and it should be noted no staff receive bonus payments.

Pay by quartiles

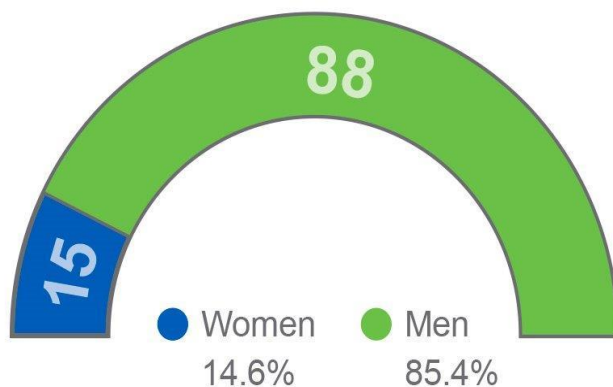
Lower pay quartile



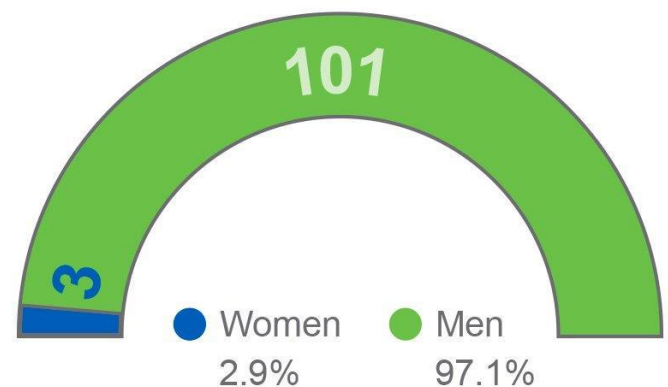
Lower middle pay quartile



Upper middle pay quartile



Upper pay quartile



The pay quartiles indicate that women make up 64.5% of the lower quartiles, 14.6% of the upper middle quartile and 2.9% in the upper quartile.

NB: The numbers referred to in this report differs from HWFRS actual establishment figure. This is due some staff falling into the category of 'reduced pay' (RDS, staff on reduced sick and maternity pay) and are not therefore included in the overall figures.

Eradicating the gender pay gap

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is committed to fair pay irrespective of gender. We will continue to build on actions and initiatives specified in the People Strategy including:

- Conducting an equal pay audit to identify any pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value, and take targeted action where appropriate.
- Attract and develop the best people through continuously improving recruitment, secondment, fast tracking and continuous development programmes
- Ensure our policies and practices are open and transparent, and in particular support family friendly options to enable attraction, retention and development of the best people
- Develop a learning culture that promotes fairness and trust, in particular in relation to gender equality.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

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HEREFORD & WORCESTER
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FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Health and Safety Committee Update

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Audit & Standards Committee with an update on activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.
-

Recommendation

It is recommended that the activities and items of significance from the Health and Safety Committee be noted, in particular:

- (i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during July 2017 to September 2017 (Quarter 2)***
- (ii) The involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives.***

Introduction

2. A key aim of Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority is to ensure the safety and well-being of its employees and to reduce and prevent accidents and injuries at work.
3. The Health and Safety Committee (the Committee) is established to provide effective arrangements for the liaison and review of matters of a common interest with regard to Health and Safety (H&S) and to act as a forum for liaison on all matters relating to H&S for key stakeholders and departments. The Committee provides the opportunity for managers from across the Service to discuss general H&S matters on which it must consult the workforce via employee representatives.
4. The Committee has the facility to task work to the Health & Safety Working Group, which sits beneath it and is chaired by the Area Commander Operations Support. The working group meets as and when required but at least every six months.

Update from Last Committee Meeting

5. The Committee last met on 18 December 2017 and significant items that were discussed are described in more detail below.

6. The H&S Committee Working Group is finalising a review on organisational road risk and provided an update on progress. Several key policies have been developed and are already being implemented. Consolidation of all the existing relevant policies and guidance documents into an overarching single policy is nearing completion. This will bring all aspects of organisational vehicle usage into one place in a single policy that is current, and easy to understand.
7. A number of H&S reporting and recording processes have also been reviewed, including accident reporting, workplace inspections and fire risk assessments, as detailed below in sections 11-12.
8. A review of quarterly performance for the relevant period was discussed in detail. The second quarter report (Appendix 1) shows there has been a small decrease in personal injuries and near hits reported. There has been a slight increase in the number of verbal abuse events reported, however, these have all been of a relatively minor nature. All such events that occurred during the quarter have had local level investigations to identify preventative control measures and to help reduce the likelihood of similar occurrences.

HWFRS H&S Update – Local Initiatives

H&S Flash - Radio Interference

9. A H&S flash (urgent information to staff) has been released regarding an issue that can cause radio frequencies to impact on the readings given by gas monitoring and detecting equipment. This can result in the fail safe alarm activation.

H&S Bulletin Item

10. Following a number of debriefs that have been received, a H&S bulletin Item was issued to remind all operational personnel of the need to wear the correct level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for any task that is being undertaken. Whilst the use of PPE is decided using a Risk Assessment, crews have been advised to review the equipment safety files to ensure they are aware of their limitations of each item of PPE.

Fire Risk Assessments

11. The Service has undertaken a review of all fire risk assessments for HWFRS premises, as is legally required. All HWFRS properties have current fire risk assessments in place which have been reviewed by the responsible manager within the last 12 months. Minor remedial actions identified have been reported but pose no significant issues.
12. Working closely with Place Partnership Ltd (PPL), a schedule for inspecting HWFRS properties to identify any structural fire safety risk has been produced and will be completed by the end of 2017. Once this work is completed, a further update will be provided to the Committee.

Risk Assessment Database

13. The Risk Assessment database provides a platform for staff to undertake and review Risk Assessments to ensure that suitable and sufficient control measures are implemented.
14. During Quarter 2 a total of 1002 Risk Assessments (RAs) were reviewed with 231 being created. Initially the majority of reviews were conducted at Training Centre; however, the database is being utilised across the organisation, ensuring crews are aware of the control measures required for the activity they are undertaking.

Regional Activities

CFOA Health and Safety West Midlands Group

15. HWFRS will be audited as part of the agreed H&S West Midlands regional business plan 2016-2020. The audit team is made up of regional H&S practitioners, with Staffordshire FRS providing the lead officer. The audit allows for four specific areas in relation to H&S to be chosen, and aims to provide further assurance that management systems are suitable and sufficient. This Audit will take place from 20th to 22nd March 2018.

National Activities

Regulation 28 Coroners Report to prevent Future Deaths

16. The Coroner's report that followed the inquest into the death of Firefighter Stephen Hunt in Greater Manchester identified ten recommendations regarding operational procedures and risk assessment competencies. HWFRS has reviewed all areas identified, checked compliance is in place in all these areas and recorded the actions taken via the H&S Committee. The return has been submitted and this matter is now closed.

Firefighter Exposure to Contaminants Project

17. With the support of the Home Office department Centre of Applied Science and Technology (CAST), a review was commissioned to determine the current potential risk of contamination to Firefighters PPE.
18. This initial review has now been completed and whilst it is progressing through the CAST formal publication process, early indications suggest it is difficult to form a firm conclusion as to whether or not Firefighters are at a higher risk of developing cancer when compared to the rest of the population. It is hoped that the CAST report will be published within the next month and in anticipation of the report, tentative proceedings have been made to establish an 'Expert Advisory Panel' to peer review the findings.

Corporate Considerations

| | |
|---|--|
| Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues) | N/A |
| Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications). | Corporate strategy – Ensuring firefighter safety |
| Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores). | Reduces the overall impact for health and safety management in the areas identified and safeguards the Services legal requirements |
| Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter) | N/A |
| Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?) | N/A |

1. Supporting Information:

Contact Officer

Jon Pryce: Area Commander

Head of Operations Support

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1. Overview of Events Reported During Quarter 2 (Jul 17 – Sept 17)

1.1 Summary

In the period of July 2017 to September 2017 a total of **43** Health and Safety (H&S) events were reported. They fall into the categories of:

- Personal Injury
- Vehicle Accidents
- Property or Equipment
- Near Hits or Causes for Concern.
- Violence or Aggression

During this period there were no events reported in the following categories:

- Exposure

Individual summaries of reporting in the key areas are outlined below.

1.2 Personal Injury

Of the **43** H&S events reported, **17** were related to the category of Personal Injury. These are described in Table 1 below:

| Sub-Categories | Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category |
|---|--|
| 11 accidents/injuries were during training. | 1 relates to an employee bumping their head during confined space training, which caused a short period of dizziness. Full PPE and Helmet was being worn. |
| | 1 relates to an employee accidentally cutting themselves with a pair of scissors. |
| | 1 relates to an employee receiving a burn to the wrist during fire behaviour training after a gap appeared between the glove and tunic sleeve. |
| | 1 relates to an employee sustaining a pulled a muscle in their back during water training. |
| | 1 relates to an employee becoming dizzy during RTC training. Rehydration and cool down treatment actions given. |
| | 1 relates to an employee missing the last step when dismounting a vehicle which resulted in minor strain to their shoulder. |
| | 1 relates to an employee sustaining a shoulder strain during on station training. 3 Calendar Days Lost |
| | 1 relates to an employee who had a minor burn to their hand at the end of a training exercise. The injured person was closing a door of the fire compartment without wearing gloves. |
| | 1 relates to an employee who strained their back during a ladder drill. 2 Calendar Days Lost |
| | 1 relates to an employee receiving a minor burn which caused blistering to the wrist during compartment fire training. Significant Event |
| 4 accident/injuries were at operational incidents | 1 relates to an employee being knocked off their feet by hose being pulled by a vehicle during a training course Significant Event 1 Calendar Day Lost until end of quarter 2 RIDDOR |
| | 1 relates to an employee sustaining a pulled muscle to their back whilst using a cutting tool during a RTC |
| | 1 relates to an employee sustaining a pulled muscle in their back whilst rolling up fire hose |

| | |
|--|--|
| | 1 relates to an employee cutting their finger whilst making entry to rear of a property |
| | 1 relates to an employee twisting their knee whilst getting off a fire engine at an incident 4 Calendar Days Lost |
| 2 accident/injuries were during routine activities | 1 relates to an employee cutting their hand on the sharp edge of a plastic floor mop |
| | 1 relates to an employee bumping their head after turning around and making contact with an open door of a microwave |
| Totalling 17 personal injuries | |
| Totalling 1 RIDDOR events | |
| Totalling 10 calendar days lost | |

Table 1: Personal Injuries Reported during Quarter 2

1.3 Vehicle Accidents

Of the **43** H&S events **12** are related to the category of Vehicle Accidents and could be classed as minor in nature - these are further described in Table 2 below. 7 of these events could be attributed to the FRS driver these events are highlighted in grey.

| Sub-Categories | Breakdown of Injuries in Each Sub-Category |
|---|---|
| 4 accidents were during routine activities | 1 relates to a fire engine clipping the wing mirror on another vehicle whilst slowly driving down a high street. |
| | 1 relates to a service vehicle being driven and scraping another vehicle whilst overtaking. |
| | 1 relates to damage to door of a fire engine when slow manoeuvring on station yard. |
| | 1 relates to a member of the public driving his car in to the back of a fire service car |
| 6 accidents were responding to incidents | 1 relates to a fire engine, whilst driving slowly responding on blue light, damaged another vehicle's wing mirror casing |
| | 1 relates to lower side locker on a fire engine being damaged by uneven ground whilst travelling slowly down a rough track. |
| | 1 relates to a fire engine colliding with the road side bank whilst manoeuvring and using a banksman, which resulted in damaged paintwork of underside panel at rear of vehicle |
| | 1 relates to damage to a fire engine wing mirror from shrub/trees on side of road when moving over to let HGV come through whilst driving on blue light. |
| | 1 relates to damage to mud guard on a fire engine whilst manoeuvring past gate post |
| | 1 relates to damage to a vehicle which, although had appeared to stop, then pulled out into the path of the fire engine responding on blue light |
| 1 accident was a non-service related accident | 1 relates to a service vehicle being damaged whilst it was left in a car park |
| 1 accident was during training | 1 relates to a service vehicle in collision with a tractor during an off road driving course, damaging tractor's light clusters |
| Totalling 12 vehicle accidents | |

Table 2: Vehicle Accidents Reported during Quarter 2

Vehicle mileage statistics for the year 2016-2017 have been provided by the Operational Logistics Fleet Department and have been used to predict vehicle mileage for Q2 2017/18. These are summarised in Table 2A below. It can be seen that there were 6 white fleet accidents out of approximately 207,364 miles driven, which equates to 1 accident for every 34,561 miles driven. The 6 accidents by red fleet vehicles were out of approximately 58,629 miles driven, which equates to 1 minor accident for every 9,772 miles driven.

| Fleet | Total Mileage 2016-2017 | Predicted Mileage Q2 2017 |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| White Fleet | 829,456 | 207,364 |
| Red Fleet | 234,516 | 58,629 |
| | Totalling 1,063,972 miles | Totalling 265,993 miles |

Table 2A: Vehicle Mileage Statistics

1.4 **Property or Equipment Damage**

Of the **43** H&S events **1** related to the category of Damage to Property or Equipment, this is further described in Table 3 below:

| Sub-Categories | Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category |
|---|---|
| 1 property or equipment failure during training | 1 relates to a high pressure air hose becoming detached from the control unit of an air inflation box. No defect was found, the hose may not have been attached correctly prior to use. |
| | Totalling 1 property or equipment damage |

Table 3: Damage to Property or Equipment Reported during Quarter 2

1.5 **Near Hits or Causes for Concern**

Of the **43** H&S events **8** related to the category of Near Hits or Causes for Concern - these are further described in Table 4 below:

| Sub-Categories | Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 2 were at operational incidents | 1 relates to a fire in a fuse board, the power was not isolated as expected when a fuse was removed from incoming supply. This resulted in the power being shorted when crews applied water to the box. Crews monitored fire spread whilst awaiting an electrician to arrive at the incident. |
| | 1 relates to a missing Tirfor winch handle only identified, when required to be used whilst dealing with incident |
| 1 was during training exercises | 1 relates to a trainee firefighter rehousing a 9m ladder. Whilst lowering the ladder the cable became slack which led to the ladder rehousing in an uncontrolled way. |
| 5 were during routine | 1 relates to a faulty piece of electrical equipment overheating |

| | |
|--|---|
| activities | within the dashboard of vehicle. |
| | 1 relates to faulty extractor fan hood in a kitchen falling on to the hob, just missing a member of staff. |
| | 1 relates to damage to the metal sleeve of RTC equipment being seen when a firefighter was looking for another piece of equipment. |
| | 1 relates to a firefighter walking backwards and almost tripping over in a pot hole in a station yard, defect reported to Place Partnership Ltd |
| | 1 relates to a fire fighters visor becoming loose due to faulty clip-on visor on helmet. This was noticed prior to use. |
| Totalling 8 near hits or causes for concern | |

Table 4: Near Hits or Causes for Concern Reported during Quarter 2

1.6 **Exposure to Violence or Aggression**

Of the **43** H&S events **5** related to the category of Exposure to Violence or Aggression, this is further described in Table 5 below:

| Sub-Categories | Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category |
|--|---|
| 4 Exposure to violence or aggression during operational activities | 1 relates to fire fighters receiving verbal abuse from a member of the public when responding to and returning from an incident |
| | 1 relates to verbal abuse experienced by fire fighters from inmates while dealing with a prison cell fire. |
| | 1 relates to verbal abuse from a member of public when fire fighters had to extinguish bonfire in a garden |
| | 1 relates to verbal abuse directed at fire fighters from a farmer burning industrial waste |
| 1 during routine work | 1 relates to verbal abuse experienced by fire fighters during a training exercise from the same member of public as in an event recorded earlier that week when the crews has been responding and returning from an incident. |
| Totalling 5 exposure to violence or aggression | |

Table 5: Exposure to Violence or Aggression Reported during Quarter 2

2. **Significant/Serious Events during Quarter 2 (Jul 17 – Sept 17)**

There have been two separate Specialist Accident Investigations allocated during quarter 2. The first occurrence relates to an employee who received a minor burn which caused blistering to their wrist whilst undertaking fire behaviour training. The second incident to be investigated relates to an employee injury where a length of hose was pulled under their feet causing them to fall over. Both of these events occurred at the end of the reporting period and are still under investigation at the time of the report.

2.1 Summary for Quarter 2 (Jul 17 – Sept 17)

1 RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) report was submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the time lost criteria.

3. Comparison Between Quarters

3.1 Comparison of Events Reported Showing Differences Q2 2016 and Q2 2017

Table 6 below compares the number of events reported in Q2 2016-17 and Q2 2017-18 for the different categories. Only 2 of the categories experienced an increase in events over the 12 months: vehicle accidents increased by 1 and reports of Violence and Aggression increased by 3. Conversely, over the same period there were 5 fewer personal injuries reported, 5 fewer near hits and 1 less report of equipment failure. Overall, event reporting as a whole has declined by 7 over the period with 43 reports in Q2 2017-18 compared to 50 in Q2 2016-17.

| Event Type | Q2 2016-17 | Q2 2017-18 | Increase/Decrease |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| Personal Injuries | 22 | 17 | -5 |
| Vehicle Accidents | 11 | 12 | +1 |
| Property or Equipment | 2 | 1 | -1 |
| Violence & Aggression | 2 | 5 | +3 |
| Near Hits | 13 | 8 | -5 |
| Overall | 50 | 43 | -7 |

Table 6: Quarterly Events Reported Q2 2016-2017 and Q2 2017-2018

Table 6 above, compares Q2 2016-17 to Q2 2017-18 reports the service has had:*

- Five fewer Personal Injury reports
- One more Vehicle Accidents report
- One less report of Damage to Property or Equipment
- Three additional reports of Violence or Aggression against service personnel
- Five fewer reports of Near Hits or Causes for Concern were made

*Specific details of these can be provided upon request to the Health and Safety advisor.

3.2 Trend Analysis

In summary, there has been a decrease in personal injuries and near hits reported. There has been a slight increase in the number of verbal abuse events reported, however these have all been of a relatively minor nature. All events that occurred during the quarter have had a minimum of a local level investigation to identify preventative control measures, to help reducing the likelihood of similar occurrences.