

AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

11 September 2009

Present:-

Councillors Burridge-Clayton, Dyke, Gribble (vice-Radford), Mills, Viney and Way

Apologies:-

Councillor Wallace

***APRC/1. Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Dyke be elected Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2010.

***APRC/2. Minutes.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2009 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/3. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were invited to consider whether they had any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and to declare any such interests at this time.

No such interests were declared.

***APRC/4. Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mills be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2010.

***APRC/5. Performance Report: April 2008 to March 2009**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Service Planning and Review (APRC/09/2) that detailed the performance and progress made by the Service as measured against the Corporate Plan goals, activities and targets for the year ended 2008/09.

The Head of Service Planning and Review gave a presentation that highlighted areas in which the Service was taking action under the Goals within the Corporate Plan and which also compared performance to other services within the South West Region.

***APRC/6. Performance Report: April 2009 to June 2009**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Service Planning and Review (APRC/09/3) that detailed the performance of the Service, together with progress, against the Corporate Plan goals, activities and targets for the first three months of the year (April to June 2009).

The report highlighted areas in which the Service was performing well, notably with the level of sickness absence. There had been a 20.6% reduction in April to June 2009 compared with the same period in 2008. Compared to other services within the south west, this was no longer the highest sickness rate within the region. This improvement in performance was partly attributable to the introduction of the new Sickness Absence Management Policy. A training strategy was being developed to enable the Service to assist managers in the handling of absence management.

The areas requiring improvement included accidental dwelling fires and accidental dwelling fire deaths. It was noted that there had been an 11% increase in the number of accidental dwelling fires compared to the same period in 2008/09. There had been a peak in May 2009 although the number of accidental dwelling fires had reduced since and it was hoped that this trend would continue. In terms of the number of fire deaths, there had been 4 to date this year, double the number in previous year although the Service had already exceeded the long term target for reducing fire deaths. As a consequence, the Service had issued a campaign aimed at people who live alone and could be at risk of fire (Operation Home Alone).

***APRC/7. Results of the 2008 Place Survey**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Service Planning and Review (APRC/09/4) that set out the results of the 2008 Place Survey, which was conducted by the Government to replace the previous Best Value User Satisfaction. The Place Survey was carried out in conjunction with constituent authority partners and asked members of the public for their views on what it was like to live in their area.

The key points for the Service were that the satisfaction level (83%) was very positive and that it was perceived that Value for Money was provided. The survey also provided a basis on which to target activity, particularly in community safety. It was noted that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Community Safety and Corporate Planning Committee in respect of the proposals for the Community Plans and Community Engagement Projects that would be utilised to deliver on this work.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Committee notes the results of the 2008 Place Survey;
- (b) That the results be utilised to inform the planning process for the targeting and delivery of prevention and protection activities.

***APRC/8. Annual Internal Audit Report 2008/09 and Plan 2009/10**

The Committee received for information a copy of the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2008/09 for the Authority as prepared by the Audit Manager for the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) in conjunction with the Treasurer and which summarised work carried out against the agreed internal audit plan for that financial year.

The Committee also considered the provisional internal audit plan for the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority for 2009/10. The Treasurer and DAP were satisfied that the areas selected for audit and the time allocated represented an appropriate programme for 2009/10.

RESOLVED that the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2008/09 for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority be noted and the Internal Audit Plan for 2009/10 be approved.

***APRC/9. Audit Progress Report**

The Committee considered the external auditors' progress report, which included an Audit Progress Summary for the period 1 April to 1 September 2009 and which summarised the following issues:

- Interim (control environment and systems) Audit Report 2008/09 and completed action plan.
- Supplementary Opinion on the Audit Plan for 2008/09;
- Audit Fee Letter for 2009/10;

Steve Brown, representing the Audit Commission, was present at the meeting and outlined the main points of the report. It was noted that the Supplementary Opinion on the Audit Plan for 2008/09 would not result in any additional charges being applied.

RESOLVED that the Audit Commission's Audit and Inspection Plan for 2009/10 be approved.

*** DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 10.00hours and concluded at 12.17hours.