

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

26 November 2009

Present:-

Councillors Dyke (Chair), Burridge-Clayton, Mills, Radford, Viney and Wallace

Apologies:-

Councillor Way

In attendance:-

Councillor John Woodman.

***APRC/10. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2009 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/11. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were asked 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.

Councillor Wallace declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in relation to the Performance Report item – on so far as this related to South West One – by virtue of his being a Somerset County Councillor.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/12 BELOW).

***APRC/12. Performance Report: April 2009 to September 2009**

(Councillor Wallace declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in relation to this item – in so far as it related to South West One – by virtue of his being a Somerset County Councillor).

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Service Planning and Review (APRC/09/5) that detailed the performance and progress made by the Service as measured against the Corporate Plan goals, activities and targets for the first six months of the year (April to September 2009).

The report highlighted areas in which the Service was applying a specific focus, namely:

- Accidental dwelling fire fatalities;
- Deliberate fires;
- Emergency response standards – house fires and road traffic collisions.

The Committee received presentations in respect of the position on accidental dwelling fire fatalities and the emergency response standards. Attention was drawn to the point that there had been 7 accidental dwelling fire fatalities to date this year and as a result, the Service was being proactive in working with partners to identify people at risk in their homes and targeting resources accordingly. At present, of the 16,000 scheduled home fire safety visits for 2009/10, 11 to 12% of these were generated by other agencies. It was anticipated that, with the action being taken, this pattern could be reversed so that 90% of referrals were generated by other agencies and discussions were ongoing with Local Strategic Partnerships in this respect. In response to a request, the Chief Fire Officer undertook to provide information to support Members of the Authority in disseminating information amongst their electorates within the community.

Reference was made to the position in respect of deliberate fires and particularly, deliberate primary fires (excluding vehicles) which had seen a 13% increase on the same period in 2008/09. It was noted that there had been some issues in respect of recording these incidents. The Service was following the same pattern as other fire and rescue services within the Region, however, on deliberate fires and would continue to work closely with colleagues to identify potential trends. There were patterns associated with seasonality such as hot summers contributing to increases in minor fires involving rubbish but the target was based on a 3 year average in order to overcome these issues.

In terms of the proposed new emergency response standards for domestic premises, the Committee was advised of the performance against the targets set. The principles of the standard include:

- A single response time regardless of whether a house is in city centre or rural village;
- First attendance of an appliance within 10 minutes with all resources arriving within 13 minutes;
- The time for response to be measured from answering of the phone call to arrival at the scene;
- A minimum of 9 crew should attend a house fire.

This was a much higher standard than had been in place previously, bearing in mind that there had not been any change in the location of stations. The Service was currently achieving the 1st attendance within 10 minutes 86% of the time. It was noted that work needed to be undertaken in respect of how attendance times were recorded and in ensuring that sufficient resources were mobilised in the first instance. Work was being undertaken within the Service in respect of the use of resources more effectively to achieve better response times but it was unlikely that additional resources would be made available as this would be disproportionate.

Members of the Committee commented that the Service was progressing well in terms of performance and expressed thanks accordingly.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/11 ABOVE).

***APRC/13. International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)**

The Committee considered a report of the Treasurer (APRC/09/6) that provided an update in respect of the progress made towards the requirement to produce IFRS compliant accounts for 2010/11.

It was noted that, although local authorities did not move to IFRS until 2010/11, work needed to be carried out to ensure that the preparation of the accounts in 2008/09 complied with IFRS so that there would be a comparator available. The Treasurer indicated that regular progress reports would be submitted to the Committee, the first stage of which would be in respect of a detailed project plan.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/14 BELOW).

***APRC/14. Audit Progress Report**

The Committee received for information an Audit Progress Summary to 18 November 2009 as prepared and submitted by the Audit Commission. The summary report covered the following issues and separate reports were enclosed as indicated:

- Managing the Transition to IFRS
- Protecting the Public Purse
- Use of Resources
- Accounts & Systems Audit

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/13 ABOVE).

***APRC/15. Six Monthly Internal Audit Monitoring Report**

The Committee received for information a copy of the Six Monthly Internal Audit Monitoring Report for the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service as prepared by the Audit Manager for the Devon Audit Partnership. The report summarised work carried out against the agreed internal audit plan for the first six months of 2009/10.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.55hours