

AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

17 November 2011

Present:-

Councillors Dyke (Chair), Drean, Gribble, Mills, Radford and Way.

Apologies:-

Councillor Burridge-Clayton.

***APRC/17. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2011 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/18. 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 declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

***APRC/19. Audit Progress Summary**

The Audit Commission produced an audit progress summary (to 7 November 2011) that set out issues covered since the previous meeting. The reports issued since the previous meeting included, amongst other matters, details of the:

- Annual Audit Letter 2010/11, and;
- Audit of system controls and financial statements.

David Bray, the new Audit Manager, and Alun Williams, representing the Audit Commission, were present at the meeting to present this item.

Alun Williams reported favourably on the Annual Audit Letter, summarising the key findings of the audit work undertaken for the Authority in 2010/11. He drew attention to Appendix 1 of the report circulated which set out details of the additional work that had been undertaken as a result of the issues with the Statement of Accounts and the extra fee that had been incurred as a result.

In terms of the audit of system controls and financial statements, Alun Williams reported that this was a detailed report that had been discussed with officers and an action plan had been agreed and was included within the report circulated by the Audit Commission. He commented that the Audit Commission had an excellent working relationship with the Finance Team which had resulted in the achievement of a set of accounts that had been completed correctly and on time and he thanked the officers involved in achieving this.

***APRC/20. Audit and Review 2011/12 Six Month Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Audit and Review Manager (APRC/11/13) that provided an update in respect of the progress made between April and September 2011 in respect of the audits undertaken.

In response to a question asked, the Audit Manager referred to the action that had been taken by the Authority in respect of the National Fraud Initiative and the cases where there had been both under and overpayments as a result in changes in circumstances that had not previously been reported. This matter had been considered at length by the Committee at its meeting on 22 September 2011 (Minute *APRC/14 refers).

The Audit Manager stated that there had been 3 audits undertaken between April and September 2011, namely Health and Safety, Democratic Services and Hydrant Management. Reference was made to the audit on health and Safety and Hydrant Management, both of which were given an assurance statement of "improvement required". In terms of Health and Safety, this area had been reviewed by the Senior Management Board with areas such as the maintenance of competencies now being addressed. This work had been fed into an Operational Assurance project to ensure that the appropriate action was taken. In terms of hydrant management, the main issue identified was the need for the establishment and maintenance of a hydrant database. The Audit Manager added that the Audit Team was able to provide the assurance statements in order to deliver improvements in service delivery in the future.

***APRC/21. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report: April to September 2011**

The Committee received for information a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (APRC/11/14) that set out the Service's performance in April to September 2011, as measured against the targets set within the Corporate Plan for 2011/12 to 2013/14.

The Committee was informed of the progress made against the targets with particular emphasis on areas where there may be a downward trend which required further work to be undertaken or where a positive performance had been achieved. In this regard, the following points were noted:

Measures 1 to 3 - Deaths, injuries and incidents which occurred as a result of fire in the places where people lived:

- In terms of measure 1, it was noted that there had been a further death as a result of a house fire since September 2011 but that a downward trend was still being maintained.
- The downward trend in respect of measures 2 & 3 was still being maintained.

Measures 4 to 6 - Deaths, injuries and incidents which occurred as a result of fire in the places where people worked and visited:

- The recent M5 incident would impact on the figures in November 2011. The Service had been commended for the way in which it dealt with this tragic incident, alongside other emergency services.

Measures 7 and 8 - Occasions where response standards are met for first attendance at dwelling fires and RTCs:

- In terms of measure, an improvement was needed and work was being undertaken to investigate the reasons behind the performance, such as the difference in turnout times from station.

Measure 9 – the Committee received a comprehensive presentation given by the Head of Community Safety and the Corporate Planning Manager that covered the progress made to date with the Local Community Plans and the proposals for the future.

***DENOTES DELAGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.35hours