

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

10 May 2012

Present:-

Councillors Dyke (Chair), Burr ridge-Clayton, Drean and Mills

In attendance:-

Alun Williams – Audit Commission
Rob Hutchins – Devon Audit Partnership (DAP)

Apologies:-

Councillors Gribble, Radford and Way

***APRC/27. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2012 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/28. 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/29. Audit Commission Reports**

The Committee received for information reports submitted by the Audit Commission on the following matters:

- (a) Audit Commission Progress including, amongst other matters, an overview of the 2011/12 Financial Statements Audit, an update on the externalisation of audit practices and future audit fees
- (b) Audit Plan 2011/12
- (c) Value for Money (VFM) Conclusion - Initial Risk Assessment.

Alun Williams, District Auditor, was in attendance at the meeting to represent the Audit Commission. He drew attention, in particular, to the point that the proposed audit fee for 2012/13 was to be fixed at the lower rate of £45093 (a 40% reduction on the previous year) for the next 5 years, giving stability in terms of financial planning. He added that the VFM conclusion risk assessment had been very positive and the Authority was likely to be given an unqualified opinion as a result.

***APRC/30. 2011-12 Internal Audit Year End Report and Internal Audit Plan 2012-13**

The Committee considered a report of the Audit & Review Manager (APRC/12/3) that set out details of the 2011/12 year end internal audit findings together with the 2012/13 Internal Audit Plan which had been prepared in conjunction with the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP).

Rob Hutchins, representing DAP, gave an overview of the work undertaken in conjunction with the Service as set out within the Audit Plan. Councillor Dyke referred to the audit of Key Financial Systems and the payroll provision in particular and enquired as to whether there was a mechanism for quality assurance of the new contract. The Clerk suggested that it would be appropriate for a report back to the Committee on the contract management aspect in due course. He added that the Service Management Board had recognised the value added by the Audit Team and the potential opportunities for improvements this provided. He indicated that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on this matter.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2012-13 be approved; and,
- (b) subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

***APRC/31. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report: April 2011 to February 2012**

The Committee received for information a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (APRC/12/4) that set out the Service's performance in April 2011 to February 2012, as measured against the targets within the Corporate Plan for 2011/12 to 2014/15.

The Committee was informed of the progress made against the targets with particular reference to work that had been undertaken in respect of Measures 7 and 8 - Emergency Response Standards. The Area Managers for Community Safety and Central Area were in attendance at the meeting and gave a presentation to the Committee focussing on the targets set for Emergency Response Standards which was "the Occasions where our response standards are met for first attendance at dwelling fires and Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)".

The Area Managers updated the Committee on research that had been undertaken to ascertain whether the response standards set were in accordance with the Service's performance requirements. It was noted that this had demonstrated that the response time was only one aspect of performance and that there were other critical factors that contributed to the Service's overall aims of "acting to protect and save", including the prevention and protection activities that were being undertaken. A Case Study was shown at the meeting that illustrated this point to the Committee and a discussion ensued thereon.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised the Committee that the Service was proposing to collate a package of information in respect of the Emergency Response Standards for publication on the Authority's website and that this would include the prevention and protection work that was being undertaken in addition to the attendance times.

Councillor Dyke indicated that it was important for the Service to communicate this message to the public in the right way and the Case Study was a good illustration of this. The Committee was supportive of the approach being taken.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.10hours