

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

19 July 2012

Present:-

Councillors Dyke, Healey (vice Gribble), Mills, Radford, J D Smith and Way

Apologies:-

Councillors Burridge-Clayton and Gribble

***APRC/32. Election of Chair**

Councillor Mills nominated, with Councillor Healey seconding, Councillor Radford.

Councillor Dyke nominated Councillor Way but this nomination fell through lack of seconder, whereupon it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Radford be elected Chair of the Committee until its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2013.

***APRC/33. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2012 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/34. Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they might have in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting.
No such interests were declared.

***APRC/35. Election of Vice-Chair**

RESOLVED that, his being the only nomination, Councillor Way be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee until its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2013.

***APRC/36. Performance Report: April 2011 - March 2012**

The Committee considered a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (APRC/12/5) on the performance of the Service during the last year (April 2011 to March 2012) against those measures contained in the approved Corporate Plan 2011/12 to 2013/14. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that, following publication of the agenda for this meeting, the national fire statistics monitor for 2011/12 had been issued. This indicated, amongst other things, that the total number of fire fatalities in England in 2011/12 was, at 304, 8% fewer than in the previous year and some 34% fewer than ten years previously.

In looking at the Service performance over the last twelve months, the following issues were highlighted:

- **Measure 1 (Fire deaths where people live)** – whilst performance was not as good as the previous year (7 deaths as against 5), the overall target to maintain a downward trend was being met and there had been a 36% reduction in deaths since combination in 2007;

- **Measure 2 (Fire Injuries where people live)** – performance in this area was not to target (an upward rather than downward trend) although, in relation to the population and number of dwellings for the area served, the overall numbers – at 71 - were still very low and the Service was examining this area in greater detail with a view to identifying and implementing remedial measures;
- **Measure 3 (Fire Incidents where people live)** – performance was on target (a downward trend), with a 14% overall reduction since combination, 10% of which was secured last year;
- **Measure 4 (Fire deaths where people work/visit)** – although four fatalities had been recorded last year, these all related to the M5 collision in November and it could be that, once the coroner’s report had been issued, this figure could reduce should any of the fatalities be linked to collision rather than fire. There had, however, been no fire deaths in non-domestic properties, a considerable achievement given that tourism was one of the main industries for the area;
- **Measure 5 (Fire injuries where people work/visit)** – performance was on target (a downward trend) which, again, was felt to be a considerable achievement given the impact of tourism on the area;
- **Measure 6 (Fire incidents where people work/visit)** – performance was on target, with a 25% reduction having been secured since combination;
- **Measures 7 and 8 (Emergency response standards, fires and road traffic collisions)** – whilst these were not performing to target (a downward rather than upward trend), attendance times (71.63% first attendance within ten minutes for fires; 80.02% first attendance within fifteen minutes for road traffic collisions) nonetheless represented a considerable achievement given difficulties associated with the rurality of both Devon and Somerset and other factors impacting on attendance at road traffic collisions (e.g. correct incident location);

RESOLVED that the report be noted and all concerned thanked for their efforts in seeking to ensure continuous improvement by the Service against the targets set.

***APRC/37. Annual Report 2011/12**

The Committee received a presentation by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer on production of an Authority annual report. The report would echo the format of the Authority Corporate Plan and would highlight successes of the Service since combination and over the last twelve months in particular. It would also, as necessary, refer to areas where lessons had been learned and improvements could be secured.

It was intended to submit the draft Annual report to the forthcoming Authority meeting on 30 July with a view to publication of the approved version in August.

***APRC/38. Audit Commission Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report prepared by the Audit Commission and detailing progress on its work both with the Authority and highlighting key emerging national issues. The report covered, amongst other things:

Local Issues

- Audit of the Authority’s financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2012;

- Conclusion of the Value for Money work on medium-term financial planning which it was intended would be reported to the September meeting of the Resources Committee.

Key Emerging National Issues

- Outsourcing the work of the Audit Practice (Grant Thornton would, on 1 September 2012, take on responsibility for auditing the Authority's financial statements for 2012/13 and going forwards);
- An update on the residual Audit Commission;
- The National Fraud Initiative and the scale of fees for this Authority of undertaking the work in 2012/13, which had been frozen at the 2010/11 level
- The development of a unified set of UK-wide Public Sector Audit Standards based on the mandatory elements of the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors International Professional Practices.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/40 BELOW).

***APRC/39. Audit and Review 2012/13 1st Quarter Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Audit & Review Manager (APRC/12/6) on work finalised as part of the 2011/12 Audit Plan, progress against the 2012/13 Plan and details on the key findings and recommendations for improvements arising from the recent audit reviews of:

- fitness testing;
- resilience (Urban Search and Rescue);
- Call Reduction;
- the High Potential Leadership Scheme; and
- fleet maintenance.

The report also identified follow-up work undertaken by the section in 2011/12 against audits initially completed in 2010/11. Such follow up work was ongoing and involved a mixture of commentary, scrutiny and advice by the Audit and Review Section together with necessary remedial action by the area subject to the audit. In examining this area, Members asked in particular to receive at the next meeting progress reports in relation to the audits of procurement, P-cards and provision and use of work equipment.

***APRC/40. Draft Statement of Accounts 2011/12**

The Authority received for information a report of the Treasurer (APRC/12/7) to which was appended, in the format required by the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Authority's Statement of Accounts for 2011/12. The Treasurer drew particular attention to the following four key statements to be considered as part of the accounts:

- the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES);
- the Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS);
- the Balance Sheet; and
- the Cash Flow Statement.

Each of these areas was expanded on in the report.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 required the draft Statement of Accounts to be prepared and certified by the Chief Finance Officer as a true and fair record by 30 June each year; and formally be approved by the Authority, following audit, by 30 September each year. The 2011/12 accounts were presented to the Committee at this stage as a matter of good practice and would be submitted for formal approval, following audit, at the meeting scheduled for 24 September 2012.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/38 ABOVE AND *APRC/41 BELOW)

***APRC/41. Draft Annual Governance Statement 2011/12**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer to the Authority (APRC/12/8) to which was appended a draft Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Authority's 2011/12 accounts.

The report outlined the current standing of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements, detailed progress against those significant internal control issues identified in the 2010/11 Annual Governance Statement together key changes since that Statement and identified significant governance issues to be addressed during 2012/13.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the current position resulting from addressing the identified areas of required activity in the 2010/11 Annual Governance Statement, as set out in Appendix A to this report, be noted;
- (b) that the draft Annual Governance Statement required to accompany the 2011/12 final accounts, as set out in Appendix B to this report, be approved in principle at this stage and – subject to incorporation of any amendment following audit of the Authority's accounts for 2011/12 – submitted to the September meeting of the Committee for ratification.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/40 ABOVE)

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.20hours.