

AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

29 November 2012

Present:-

Councillors Radford (Chair), Burridge-Clayton, Dyke, Gribble and J D Smith.

Apologies:-

Received from Councillors Mills and Way.

In attendance:

Alun Williams and David Bray – representing Grant Thornton
Rob Hutchings – representing Devon Audit Partnership

***APRC/49. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2012 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/50. Planned External Audit Fee 2012/13**

The Committee received for information a copy of a letter from Grant Thornton (successors to the Audit Commission) setting out the work programme and scale of fees proposed by the Audit Commission for this Authority in 2012/13. The letter also set out the scope and timing of the proposed work and details of the team to undertake it.

It was noted that the audit fee was part of a five year contract and thus was fixed for that period at £45,000 per annum.

***APRC/51. Audit & Review 2012-13 2nd Quarter Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Audit & Review Manager (APRC/12/12) that set out the progress made against the 2012/13 Audit & Review Plan, detailing in particular the key findings of the audits on:

- Contract management
- Risk management
- Commercial Services
- Gartan

The assurance statement for both contract management and risk management indicated that improvements were required in these areas. In terms of contract management, it was noted that work was ongoing in respect of the development of a Procurement Strategy and that within this, a sub strategy for managing contracts would be defined. It was envisaged that this would ensure the delivery of the expected audit control improvements and organisational benefits.

The audit of the Service's risk management arrangements had indicated that there was a lack of strategy and unconfirmed level of risk tolerance which impacted on its ability to provide a structured and coherent approach to identifying, assessing and managing its risks. A revised policy and new process map had already been developed and would be rolled out shortly, followed by the population of one Corporate Risk Register that would incorporate all corporate, operational, programme and project risks in one central location.

The progress made in each of these areas would be reported to a future meeting.

***APRC/52. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report: April - September 2012**

The Committee received for information a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (APRC/12/13) setting out the Service's performance during the period April to September 2012 against those measures contained within the approved Corporate Plan for 2012/13 to 2015/16. The following issues were highlighted:

- **Measure 1 (Deaths from fire where people live):** although there had been more deaths from fire (5 compared to 3 in the same period last year), the overall target to maintain a downward trend was on track with the numbers concerned being very small;
- **Measure 2 (Injuries from fire where people live):** performance in this area was not to target currently (to achieve a long term downward trend). As there had been only 24 incidents recorded between April and September 2012, however, as compared with 26 for the same period in 2011/12, the statistics showed a slight improvement so far this year;
- **Measure 3 (fire incidents where people live):** although there had been a slight decrease in performance compared to the same period in 2011/12, the overall target to maintain a downward trend in fire incidents where people live was on track;
- **Measures 4, 5 and 6 (deaths in places where people work or visit):** In terms of measure 4, there had been one fatality in September 2012 which involved a car fire and this was being treated by the Police as a murder. The other two measures were on target, with a downward trend being maintained;
- **Measures 7 (first attendance in ten minutes at fires where people live) and 8 (first attendance in fifteen minutes at road traffic collisions):** performance against these targets had dropped for the period April to September 2012 as compared with the same period in 2011/12 (72.32% to 63.89% for first attendance in 10 minutes) and this had continued to be an area of focus for the Service. Although it had been predicted that there may be a drop in performance as a result of the merger of the Devon and Somerset Control rooms into one control room in April 2012, it had not been envisaged that this decline would continue in the longer term as increased familiarity of staff with processes, procedures and equipment would have, in time, delivered improvements in performance. Further detailed analysis revealed 2 issues with the accuracy of the statistics recorded due to systems not updating correctly. These issues were now being addressed and it was envisaged that this would result in an improvement in performance of around 10% as a result. It was stressed that this flaw in the statistics had only impacted on the timings recorded within the performance monitoring systems and had in no way affected the service provided to the community;

- **Measure 9 (publicly available and current Local Community Plan for each station):** it was noted that all of the local Community Plans had been completed for 2012/13 and work was on track for completion and publication of the Plans for 2013/14;
- **Measure 10 (EFQM assessment score):** one of the strategic goals of the Service was to move towards being an excellent organisation by 2014. The EFQM model was used to assess the Service's progression towards this and it was noted that the first formal external assessment of this would be undertaken early in 2013;
- **Measure 11 (staff survey results):** it was envisaged that a report on the key findings of the survey would be available by the end of 2012.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 10.55hours