

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

29 July 2013

Present:-

Councillors Brazil, Burridge-Clayton, Edmunds, Gribble, Healey, Radford and Yeomans (vice Horsfall).

Apologies:-

Councillors Horsfall and Knight.

***APRC/1. Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Radford be elected Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2014.

***APRC/2. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2013 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/3. Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Burridge-Clayton be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2014.

***APRC/4. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report: April to June 2013**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Operations (APRC/13/6) setting out Service performance for the period 1 April to 30 June 2013 against those measures contained in the approved Corporate Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16. In particular, the following issues were highlighted:

- Measure 1 (fire deaths where people live): there had been 5 fire deaths recorded in the first quarter of 2013 which was the highest in this period since reporting on these measures started in 2007/08;
- Measure 2 (fire injuries where people live): there had been 15 injuries in the first quarter of 2013/14 which was the same as compared with the same period in 2012/13;
- Measure 3 (incidents where people live): there had been a slight increase in the number of fires in the first quarter of 2013/14, with small increases in both deliberate and accidental fires;
- Measure 4 (fire deaths where people work): there had been one death in April 2013 in an outdoor fire that was currently the subject of a police investigation;

- Measure 5 (fire injuries where people work): there had been 8 injuries to date in 2013/14, 6 of which were as a result of vehicle fires. This was the highest number of injuries in the first quarter since 2009/10. Reference was made to the length of time taken to respond to a particular incident. It was noted that the Service was able to model the times that it should have taken to attend incidents and that further information in this respect would be provided in future reports.
- Measure 6 (incidents where people work): there had been an overall increase of 2 fires from 348 to 350 between April and June 2013 as compared with the same period in 2012, however deliberate fires were down from 108 to 98 for the same period. Non domestic fires had seen a decrease of 15.2% compared with last year whereas “other” and vehicle fires had both increased;
- Measures 7 & 8 (emergency response standards): the dwellings emergency response standard which was based on a 10 minute first attendance had improved in the first quarter of 2013/14 to 70.11% in June 2013. The Service Leadership Team continued to actively monitor the performance in this area to seek further improvements. In terms of first attendance in 15 minutes for a Road Traffic Collision, it was noted that there had been a significant improvement in performance in the first quarter to 76.81%.

In terms of sickness absence, it was reported that there had been a slight increase in 2013/14 which was largely due to an increase in long term sickness. The Service continued to work towards improving performance in this area, with measures such as return to work interviews and access to counselling in place to assist with this.

***APRC/5. Audit Committee Update**

The Committee received for information a report submitted by Grant Thornton setting out the progress made to 12 July 2013 in delivering its responsibilities as the Authority’s external auditors. David Bray and Alun Williams, representing Grant Thornton were present at the meeting to present this item.

The report covered, amongst other things:

Local issues:

- The work undertaken to date in respect of the 2012-13 Financial Statements Audit;
- Value for Money (VFM) conclusions;
- A review of the Authority’s arrangements to follow up “matches” under the National Fraud Initiative for 2012/13 which had been assessed as “green”.

Emerging National issues:

- Details of the emerging Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2013/14 and its impact on the Authority;
- Internal audit – practical case studies.

***APRC/6. Audit and Review 2012/13 1st Quarter Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Audit and Review Manager (APRC/13/7) that provided an update on work finalised as part of the 2012/13 Audit Plan, progress against the 2013/14 Plan and details on the key findings and recommendations for improvements arising from the recent audit reviews of:

- Emergency Call Incident Support – Resource Mobilising;
- Flexi Duty System; and
- Business Support and Service Delivery Programmes.

Dominic Measures of the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) was in attendance at the meeting and gave an overview of the work that had been undertaken as part of this arrangement. He stated that an internal ICT Audit Plan had been put together (but was still in draft) that identified, amongst other things, areas of high risk for the Authority that should be pursued.

***APRC/7. 2012-13 Draft Annual Statement of Assurance**

The Committee considered a report of the Audit and Review Manager (APRC/13/8) to which was appended a draft Annual Governance Statement to accompany the Authority's 2012/13 accounts.

The Audit and Review Manager outlined the changes in the way in which the Annual Governance Statement had been presented, namely to incorporate this within an Annual Statement of Assurance in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework requirements. The Annual Statement of Assurance thus incorporated details of the Authority's financial and operational assurance together with information on the current standing of the Authority's corporate governance arrangements and progress against those significant internal control issues identified in the 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the internal control issues identified within paragraph 3 of the draft Annual Statement of Assurance for 2012/13 as set out in Appendix A to this report, be noted;
- (b) that the draft Annual Governance Statement required to accompany the 2012/13 final accounts, as set out within the draft Statement of Assurance in Appendix A 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 2012/13 – submitted to the September meeting of the Committee for ratification.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/8 BELOW)

***APRC/8. Draft Statement of Accounts 2012-13**

The Committee received for information a report of the Treasurer (APRC/13/9) to which was appended, in the format required by the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Authority's Statement of Accounts for 2012/13. The Treasurer drew particular attention as part of a presentation at the meeting 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 2012/13 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 25 September 2013.

(SEE ALSO MINUTE *APRC/7 ABOVE)

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.45hours