

AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

6 February 2015

Present:-

Councillors Radford (Chair), Edmunds, Healey and Singh

Apologies:-

Received from Councillors Randall Johnson and Way.

***APRC/17. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014 be signed as a correct record.

***APRC/18. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 - Revised Authority Policy**

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (APRC/15/01) that reflected the delegation of power to the Audit and Performance Review Committee to take future responsibility for the RIPA Policy and as a result, which sought approval to amend the existing RIPA Policy following the publication of new Codes of Practice and an evaluation of the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner's (OSC) most recent Annual Report (2014).

RESOLVED that the amended Authority RIPA Policy, as appended to report APCR/15/01, be approved.

***APRC/19. External Audit Update**

The Authority's external auditor, Grant Thornton, submitted for information a report setting out the progress made in delivering its audit responsibilities to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority up to 26 January 2015.

The report also covered emerging issues and developments nationally including:

- The report "Rising to the Challenge, the Evolution of Local Government" published in December 2014;
- The report "2020 Vision";
- A proposal made by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to bring forward the audit deadline for 2017/18 to the end of July 2018.

***APRC/20. Audit and Review 2014-15 3rd Quarter Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Audit and Review Manager (APRC/15/02) that provided assurance statements for the audits completed to date in 2014/15 and which recorded progress against the approved Internal Audit Plan.

Reference was made in particular to the work that had been undertaken on request of the Committee in respect of the Expotel contract (now Capita). The Audit and Review Manager responded that the Service had received a payment at the year end from Expotel previously in recognition of the use of this service but that it was small in the context of the amount spent with them. He stated that there was a need for the Service to ensure it was getting value for money from all contracts including Expotel and, as a result, contract management would be included in the Audit Plan in the future.

The report also provided an overview of the key financial systems audit work undertaken and completed in 2014/15 by the Devon Audit Partnership and Anne Parsons was in attendance at the meeting to highlight the key findings to the Committee. She reported that the work undertaken on the Authority's key financial systems had revealed that there was a high standard in all of the areas tested which reflected very well on the Authority. She expressed her thanks to the staff involved for their co-operation and professionalism.

The Committee had requested at a previous meeting that a mechanism was instigated to monitor the progress made against all audit work for the Authority, including external audit, internal audit and operational safety assurance. The Audit and Review Manager highlighted that an audit tracker had been designed and embedded across the Service. It was noted that there were 298 recommendations within the tracker which were open currently, of which 59 were recorded as a high priority. These were set out within Appendix A of report APRC/15/2 for information.

***APRC/21. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report: April to December 2014**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Operations (APRC/15/04) that detailed the Service's performance for the period April to December 2014 against the measures set out within the Corporate Plan for 2013/14 to 2014/15.

In terms of the performance to date this year, the Committee noted that:

- Measures 1 (deaths which occurred where people lived) – there had been 2 fire deaths to December 2014 as compared with 9 in the same period in 2013-14 which was a welcome decrease;
- Measure 2 (injuries which occurred where people lived) – there had been a significant reduction in dwelling fire injuries to 32 from 71 in the same period in 2013-14, 30 being accidental and only 2 deliberate. There was some Incident Recording System (IRS) forms outstanding to date, however, which may push the number of dwelling fire injuries up to 38 for this period;
- Measure 3 (incidents which occurred where people lived) – there were 712 dwelling fires between April and December 2014 as compared with 819 in 2013-14 which continued the overall downward trend that had occurred almost year on year since 2007 with the exception of 2013-14;
- Measure 4 (deaths which occurred where people worked and visited) – there had not been any fire deaths in the last 3 months, making 2 in total between April and December 2014 which was the same as in 2013/14,
- Measure 5 (injuries which occurred where people worked or visited) – there was a decrease of 13.9% in the number of injuries recorded in April to December 2014,

- Measure 6 (incidents which occurred where people worked and visited) – the number of incidents, including both deliberate and accidental fires, had decreased from 1095 to 1085 in April to December 2014 when compared with the same period in 2013/14;
- Measures 7 and 8 (emergency response standards) – Measure 7 had shown a slight decrease in performance to 68.37% for first attendance in 10 minutes from 68.65% in the same period in 2013/14. This had been impacted by the recent periods of industrial action. Excluding the periods of industrial action, performance had been at 70.15%. For Measure 8, there had also been a slight decrease on first attendance within 15 minutes to road traffic collisions to 74.95% from 75.94% to December 2014 but this had not been impacted upon by industrial action to the same degree as for measure 7. It was noted that each command was receiving a detailed breakdown on the emergency response performance so that the Area Commanders could address the issues.
- Sickness absence – the average number of days sickness lost per person per shift/day had increased to 6.89 days in April to December 2014 as compared with 5.02 days in the same period in 2013/14, caused partly by an increase in long term sickness. There had been some issues with the new sickness absence reporting system but this had been addressed with the issuing of guidance to staff in respect of recording return to work information. This matter was being closely monitored by the Human Resources Management and Development Committee.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.57hours.