



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

M. Pearson
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

To: **The Chair and Members of the Audit &
Performance Review Committee**

(see below)

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AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

Friday, 10 May, 2019

A meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee will be held on the above date, **commencing at 10.00 am in Committee Room B, Somerset House, Service Headquarters, Exeter** to consider the following matters.

M. Pearson
Clerk to the Authority

A G E N D A

PLEASE REFER TO THE NOTES AT THE END OF THE AGENDA LISTING SHEETS

1 Apologies

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2019 attached.

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

PART 1 - OPEN COMMITTEE

4 External Audit Progress Report (Pages 5 - 20)

The Authority's External Auditor, Grant Thornton, has submitted an Audit Progress Report, including a Sector Update (as attached) up to the beginning of May 2019.

5 External Audit Fee Letter 2019-20 (Pages 21 - 24)

The External Auditor, Grant Thornton, has submitted for consideration its proposed Audit Fee Letter for 2019-20, a copy of which is enclosed with this agenda.

6 International Auditing Standards Compliance Letters

To comply with International Auditing Standards, the Authority's external auditor (Grant Thornton) is required, as part of its work on the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019, to:

- establish an understanding of the Authority's management processes in place to prevent and detect fraud and to ensure compliance with law and regulation; and
- make inquiries of both management and Those Charged With Governance (i.e. this Committee) as to their knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud.

To assist in discharging this, in January of this year Grant Thornton wrote to both the Service Director of Finance and the Chair of this Committee setting out a number of matters requiring a response. Copies of these responses are now enclosed with this agenda.

a International Auditing Standards - Response Letter from Management (Pages 25 - 32)

Copy of response letter attached.

b International Auditing Standards - Response Letter from Chair of the Audit & Performance Review Committee (Pages 33 - 38)

Copy of the response letter attached.

7 Audit & Review 2018-19 Progress Report (Pages 39 - 48)

Report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/4) attached.

8 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan (Pages 49 - 50)

Report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/5) attached.

9 Draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2018-19 (Pages 51 - 78)

Report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/6) attached.

10 Corporate Risk Register (Pages 79 - 82)

Report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/7) attached.

11 Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report: October 2018 to March 2019 (Pages 83 - 112)

Report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/8) attached.

12 Authority Policy For Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) - Review (Pages 113 - 118)

Report of the Director of Corporate Services (APRC/19/9) attached.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Membership:-

Councillors Healey MBE (Chair), Bowyer, Clayton, Mathews, Napper (Vice-Chair), Saywell and Wheeler

NOTES

1.	<u>Access to Information</u> Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact the person listed in the “Please ask for” section at the top of this agenda.
2.	<u>Reporting of Meetings</u> Any person attending a meeting may report (film, photograph or make an audio recording) on any part of the meeting which is open to the public – unless there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chair - and use any communication method, including the internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), to publish, post or otherwise share the report. The Authority accepts no liability for the content or accuracy of any such report, which should not be construed as representing the official, Authority record of the meeting. Similarly, any views expressed in such reports should not be interpreted as representing the views of the Authority. Flash photography is not permitted and any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.
3.	<u>Declarations of Interests at meetings (Authority Members only)</u> If you are present at a meeting and you are aware that you have either a disclosable pecuniary interest, personal interest or non-registerable interest in any matter being considered or to be considered at the meeting then, unless you have a current and relevant dispensation in relation to the matter, you must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) disclose at that meeting, by no later than commencement of consideration of the item in which you have the interest or, if later, the time at which the interest becomes apparent to you, the existence of and – for anything other than a “sensitive” interest – the nature of that interest; and then(ii) withdraw from the room or chamber during consideration of the item in which you have the relevant interest. If the interest is sensitive (as agreed with the Monitoring Officer), you need not disclose the nature of the interest but merely that you have an interest of a sensitive nature. You must still follow (i) and (ii) above. Where a dispensation has been granted to you either by the Authority or its Monitoring Officer in relation to any relevant interest, then you must act in accordance with any terms and conditions associated with that dispensation. Where you declare at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary or personal interest that you have not previously included in your Register of Interests then you must, within 28 days of the date of the meeting at which the declaration was made, ensure that your Register is updated to include details of the interest so declared.
4.	<u>Part 2 Reports</u> Members are reminded that any Part 2 reports as circulated with the agenda for this meeting contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Committee Secretary at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.
5.	<u>Substitute Members (Committee Meetings only)</u> Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 37, the Clerk (or his representative) must be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting. Members are also reminded that substitutions are not permitted for full Authority meetings.

AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

18 January 2019

Present:-

Councillors Healey MBE (Chair), Bowyer, Clayton, Mathews, Napper (Vice-Chair), Saywell and Wheeler

In attendance:-

Councillors Coles and Randall Johnson (in accordance with Standing Order 38)
Barrie Morris and Aditi Chandramouli - Grant Thornton

* **APRC/14** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2019 be signed as a correct record.

* **APRC/15** **External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update**

The Committee received for information a report submitted by the Authority's external auditors, Grant Thornton, setting out the progress made in delivery of its audit responsibilities to the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority (up to January 2019). The report covered the following matters, amongst others:

- The completion of the 2017/18 audit together with planning undertaken for the 2018/19 audit of financial statements; and
- A fire sector update including HMICFRS Inspections (with a summary of the first tranche results), the NFCC response to the new fire inspectorate reports, a report on creating and operating a successful fire trading company and an overview of the final report on the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.

NB. Councillor Saywell declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being an Authority appointed Non-Executive Director on the Board of Red One Limited. Councillor Saywell neither spoke nor voted on this item.

* **APRC/16** **External Audit Plan**

The Committee received for information an external audit plan for the year ending 31 March 2019 from the Authority's auditors, Grant Thornton. The Plan provided the scope and timings for the statutory audit of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority's financial statements. It also identified areas of significant risks for the Service, issues of materiality and details of Value for Money arrangements.

The Committee noted that, for the audit, Grant Thornton would be focussing on four significant risks as identified within the report which were:

- The revenue cycle including fraudulent transactions (rebutted);
- Management override of controls;

- The valuation of property, plant and equipment; and,
- The valuation of pension fund net liability.

Attention was drawn to the Value for Money arrangements and two significant risks that had been identified which were Medium Term Financial Planning and Red One.

It was noted that the audit fees for 2018/19 were £26k as opposed to £33.8k in the previous year which was a welcome reduction.

NB. Councillor Saywell declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being an Authority appointed Non-Executive Director on the Board of Red One Limited. Councillor Saywell neither spoke nor voted on this item.

* **APRC/17** **Group Accounts for Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority & Red One Ltd.**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance (Treasurer) (APRC/19/1) that set out the position in respect of the provision of group accounts for the Authority's trading company, Red One Limited.

Under the Chartered Institute for Public Financial Accountants Code of Practice, the Authority was able to take a view on materiality when presenting group accounts. Following discussion with the external auditor, Grant Thornton, it was the Treasurer's view that the activities of Red One Limited were not material to the Authority's Statement of Accounts and therefore, it was recommended that the accounts were not consolidated.

RESOLVED that the accounts of Red One Limited be not consolidated into group accounts for the 2018/19 financial year.

NB. Councillor Saywell declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being an Authority appointed Non-Executive Director on the Board of Red One Limited. Councillor Saywell neither spoke nor voted on this item.

* **APRC/18** **Audit & Review 2018-19 Progress Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/2) that set out the progress made to Quarter 3 of 2018-19 on internal audits as compared with the approved Internal Audit Plan, together with updates on additional review work undertaken.

The Director of Service Improvement drew attention to the point that the report had been improved to give clarity in respect of the progress being made with each audit instead of just stating "ongoing".

Councillor Randall Johnson sought an update in respect of the position on the Emergency Services Network (ESN). The Director of Service Improvement advised the Committee that there was no transition to ESN until 2020. All Services could transition now when they were ready and willing. Given that there was a regional approach, however, the logistics meant that Services would transition together on a regional basis. It was noted that there was still a lot of work being undertaken in respect of connectivity and signal in remote rural areas and the Service was awaiting the outcome of further testing.

* **APRC/19** **Corporate Performance Reporting**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/19/3) that outlined how the Service was working towards embedding a positive performance culture through the new Performance management Framework.

The Committee also received a presentation at the meeting in respect of the how the new Performance Framework might help to achieve the priorities set out within the Fire and Rescue Plan and the Integrated Risk Management plan. There were four key elements covered during the presentation, namely:

- Organisational culture;
- The proposed Performance Management Framework;
- Performance reporting and the roles of personnel at different levels within the organisation.

The presentation provided the Committee with an overview of how the Service was progressing and clarified its role in terms of scrutinising the performance of the organisation. It was noted that Officers felt there had already been a positive change in direction within the Service in terms of performance with greater engagement and staff asking appropriate questions. The Director of Service Improvement welcomed challenge from the Committee and the opportunity to provide additional information to assist in this role.

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.20 am

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Audit Progress Report and Sector Update

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
Year ending 31 March 2019

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10 May 2019



Agenda Item 4

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Introduction



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This paper provides the Audit and Performance Review Committee with a report on progress in delivering our responsibilities as your external auditors.

The paper also includes:

- a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to you as a fire authority; and
- includes a number of challenge questions in respect of these emerging issues which the Committee may wish to consider (these are a tool to use, if helpful, rather than formal questions requiring responses for audit purposes)

Members of the Audit and Performance Review Committee can find further useful material on our website, where we have a section dedicated to our work in the public sector. Here you can download copies of our publications www.grantthornton.co.uk

If you would like further information on any items in this briefing, or would like to register with Grant Thornton to receive regular email updates on issues that are of interest to you, please contact either your Engagement Lead or Engagement Manager.

Progress at May 2019

Financial Statements Audit

We have started planning for the 2018/19 financial statements audit and have issued a detailed audit plan, setting out our proposed approach to the audit of the Authority's 2018/19 financial statements.

We commenced our interim audit in January 2019. Our interim fieldwork includes:

- Updated review of the Authority's control environment
- Updated understanding of financial systems
- Early work on emerging accounting issues
- Early substantive testing

There are no issues that we need to bring to the Committee's attention from the work we have completed to date.

The statutory deadline for the issue of the 2018/19 opinion is 31 July 2019. We are discussing our plan and timetable with officers.

The final accounts audit is due to begin on 10 June with findings reported to you in our Audit Findings Report. We will present our report at the July Audit and Performance Review Committee meeting and issue our audit opinion by the 31 July deadline.

Value for Money

The scope of our work is set out in the guidance issued by the National Audit Office. The Code requires auditors to satisfy themselves that; "the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources".

The guidance confirmed the overall criterion as: "in all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people".

The three sub criteria for assessment to be able to give a conclusion overall are:

- Informed decision making
- Sustainable resource deployment
- Working with partners and other third parties

Details of our initial risk assessment to determine our approach were included in our Audit Plan. We identified two significant Value for Money Risks – Medium Term Financial Planning, and Red One – and are currently carry out our audit work on this.

We will report our work in the Audit Findings Report and give our Value For Money Conclusion by the deadline in July 2019.

Other areas

Meetings

We met with Finance Officers in January and April as part of our quarterly liaison meetings and continue to be in discussions with finance staff regarding emerging developments and to ensure the audit process is smooth and effective.

Events

We provide a range of workshops, along with network events for members and publications to support the Authority. Your officers attended our Financial Reporting Workshop in February, which helps to ensure that members of your Finance Team are up to date with the latest financial reporting requirements for local authority accounts.

Further details of the publications that may be of interest to the Authority are set out in our Sector Update section of this report.

Audit Deliverables

2018/19 Deliverables	Planned Date	Status
Fee Letter Confirming audit fee for 2018/19.	April 2018	Complete
Accounts Audit Plan We are required to issue a detailed accounts audit plan to the Audit and Performance Review Committee setting out our proposed approach in order to give an opinion on the Authority's 2018-19 financial statements.	January 2019	Complete
Interim Audit Findings We will report to you the findings from our interim audit and our initial value for money risk assessment within our Progress Report.	May 2019	Completed, included in this report
Audit Findings Report The Audit Findings Report will be reported to the July Audit and Performance Review Committee.	July 2019	Not yet due
Auditors Report This is the opinion on your financial statement, annual governance statement and value for money conclusion.	July 2019	Not yet due
Annual Audit Letter This letter communicates the key issues arising from our work.	August 2019	Not yet due

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Authority responsibilities

In our Audit Plan presented to the Audit and Performance Review Committee in January 2019 we have communicated our expectations around the Authority's responsibilities for timely production of the draft accounts supported by appropriate working papers. Should delays be experienced in the provision of these requirements or should additional work be required on our part due to complex technical issues, new arrangements and delays in response to queries additional costs will be incurred.

Any additional fees are subject to approval by PSAA.

Results of Interim Audit Work

The findings of our interim audit work, and the impact of our findings on the accounts audit approach, are summarised in the table below:

	Work performed	Conclusions and recommendations
Internal audit	We have completed a high level review of internal audit's overall arrangements. Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention.	Overall, we have concluded that the internal audit service provides an independent and satisfactory service to the Authority and that internal audit work contributes to an effective internal control environment. Our review of internal audit work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.
Entity level controls	We have obtained an understanding of the overall control environment relevant to the preparation of the financial statements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and enforcement of integrity and ethical values • Commitment to competence • Participation by those charged with governance • Management's philosophy and operating style • Organisational structure • Assignment of authority and responsibility • Human resource policies and practices 	Our work has identified no material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's financial statements

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	Work performed	Conclusions and recommendations
Review of information technology controls	<p>We performed a high level review of the general IT control environment, as part of the overall review of the internal controls system.</p> <p>IT (information technology) controls were observed to have been implemented in accordance with our documented understanding.</p>	<p>Our work has identified no material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's financial statements. However, we note that the recommendation from both our 2016/17 and 2017/18 audits relating to setting up formal proactive reviews of information security events (such as monitoring login activity and unauthorised access attempts) has not yet been fully implemented.</p> <p>We have discussed this with officers who have stated that the Authority has put together a business case for a protective monitoring system which is progressing through the approval process.</p>
Documentation of business processes	<p>We have completed a detailed documentation of your key business processes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payroll Accounts Payable Journals Property, Plant and Equipment Local Government and Firefighters Pension Scheme Investments and debt Accounts receivable Council tax and NNDR Cash <p>Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention</p>	<p>Overall, we have concluded that the business processes are appropriate in relation to the activities of the entity. Work in this area has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach</p>
Walkthrough testing	<p>We have completed walkthrough tests of the Authority's controls operating in areas where we consider that there is a risk of material misstatement to the financial statements, including journals, pensions and property, plant and equipment.</p> <p>Our work has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention. Internal controls have been implemented by the Authority in accordance with our documented understanding.</p>	<p>Our work has not identified any weaknesses which impact on our audit approach.</p>

	Work performed	Conclusions and recommendations
Journal entry controls	<p>We have reviewed the Authority's journal entry policies and procedures as part of determining our journal entry testing strategy and have not identified any material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's control environment or financial statements. As in prior years, our testing identified that journals were not authorised. A retrospective review of journals is in place and will be reviewed at year end.</p>	<p>Our work has identified no material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's financial statements.</p> <p>Extraction and testing of journals assessed to be unusual will be undertaken as part of our final accounts work</p>
Early substantive testing	<p>We have started our substantive testing work with regards to firefighters pensions lump sums and commutations from April 2018 – February 2019.</p> <p>This work is underway and will be completed once we have received the evidence requested from West Yorkshire Pension Fund.</p>	<p>Our work is currently underway and will be concluded during the course of the final accounts audit. We will also test a sample of commutations and lump sums paid in March 2019</p>
Change in Service Providers	<p>During the 2018-19 financial year, there has been a change in service provider in relation to the firefighters pension scheme and payroll services. We have undertaken an exercise to ensure the completeness of the data transfer from the old provider to the new provider,</p> <p>Our work in respect of firefighters pensions is complete and has not identified any issues which we wish to bring to your attention.</p> <p>Our work in respect of payroll is still underway and will be completed during the course of the audit.</p>	<p>In relation to firefighters pensions, our work has not identified any material weaknesses which are likely to adversely impact on the Authority's financial statements.</p> <p>Our work in relation to payroll is currently underway and will be concluded during the course of the final accounts audit.</p>

Sector Update

Councils and Authorities are tackling a continuing drive to achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of public services, whilst facing the challenges to address rising demand, ongoing budget pressures and social inequality.

Our sector update provides you with an up to date summary of emerging national issues and developments to support you. We cover areas which may have an impact on your organisation, the wider NHS and the public sector as a whole. Links are provided to the detailed report/briefing to allow you to delve further and find out more.

Our public sector team at Grant Thornton also undertake research on service and technical issues. We will bring you the latest research publications in this update. We also include areas of potential interest to start conversations within the organisation and with Audit and Performance Review Committee members, as well as any accounting and regulatory updates.

- [Grant Thornton Publications](#)
- [Insights from local government sector specialists](#)
- [Reports of interest](#)
- [Accounting and regulatory updates](#)

More information can be found on our dedicated public sector and local government sections on the Grant Thornton website by clicking on the logos below:

Public Sector

Local
government

Labour commits to installing sprinkler systems in all new schools

Labour says it would close a loophole in current legislation that allows a significant proportion of schools not to install sprinklers as figures show less than one in three have them fitted.

A Labour government would ensure all new schools have sprinkler systems in place as fresh figures show less than one in three schools built or refurbished by central government since 2010 have them installed.

Party officials told *The Independent* that, if elected, Labour would remove a “loophole” in the existing legislation, which they claim allows a significant proportion of schools not to fit sprinklers.

The announcement comes after new figures were disclosed by schools minister Nick Gibb in response to a written parliamentary question in the Commons this month.

Mr Gibb said that since 2010, of the 260 schools commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) under phase one of the Priority School Building Programme, 74 (28 per cent) have, or are planned to have, sprinkler systems.

It means the vast majority (72 per cent) of the schools on programme – aiming to rebuild and refurbish schools buildings in the worst conditions across the country – will not have sprinklers in place. The Government hoped that most of the schools would open by the end of 2017.

Sprinklers are currently mandatory in schools in Scotland and Wales, but not in England and Northern Ireland – despite a warning from fire chiefs last year that the Government risks “playing with children’s lives” and called for all new and refurbished schools to have them installed.

Earlier this month, unions also lashed out at a decision to rebuild Selsey Academy in West Sussex without sprinklers after the building was almost completely destroyed by a fire in 2016. The Fire Brigades Union said it was “incomprehensible” and said the government was “shockingly cavalier” in its attitude towards fire safety.

Angela Rayner, the Shadow Education Secretary, told *The Independent* that a Labour government would provide £14bn that was needed to bring schools up to a “good standard”.

A DfE spokesperson said: “Schools have a range of fire protection measures and new schools undergo an additional check while being designed. Where sprinklers are deemed necessary to keep children safe, they must be installed.

“Since the Grenfell tragedy we have contacted all bodies responsible for safety in schools and instructed them to carry out checks to identify buildings that may require further investigation.

“We are working closely with the two schools where ACM classing of potential concern has been identified so that the necessary remedial action is taken.” The DfE added that all new school buildings must be signed off by an independent inspector to certify that they meet the requirements and designed to protect occupants and allow them to escape in the event of a fire.

Existing regulations contain the presumption that new schools should have sprinklers fitted except in cases where buildings are considered to be “low-risk”. Labour says it will alter this to ensure that new-builds must have systems installed.

Public Sector Audit Appointments – Report on the results of auditors’ work 2017/18

This is the fourth report published by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) and summarises the results of auditors’ work at 495 principal local government and police bodies for 2017/18. This will be the final report under the statutory functions from the Audit Commission Act 1998 that were delegated to PSAA on a transitional basis.

The report covers the timeliness and quality of financial reporting, auditors’ local value for money work, and the extent to which auditors used their statutory reporting powers.

For 2017/18, the statutory accounts publication deadline came forward by two months to 31 July 2018. This was challenging for bodies and auditors and it is encouraging that 431 (87 per cent) audited bodies received an audit opinion by the new deadline.

The most common reasons for delays in issuing the opinion on the 2017/18 accounts were:

- technical accounting/audit issues;
- various errors identified during the audit;
- insufficient availability of staff at the audited body to support the audit;
- problems with the quality of supporting working papers; and
- draft accounts submitted late for audit.

All the opinions issued to date in relation to bodies’ financial statements are unqualified, as was the case for the 2016/17 accounts. Auditors have made statutory recommendations to three bodies, compared to two such cases in respect of 2016/17, and issued an advisory notice to one body.

The number of qualified conclusions on value for money arrangements looks set to remain relatively constant. It currently stands at 7 per cent (32 councils, 1 fire and rescue authority, 1 police body and 2 other local government bodies) compared to 8 per cent for 2016/17, with a further 30 conclusions for 2017/18 still to be issued.

The most common reasons for auditors issuing qualified VFM conclusions for 2017/18 were:

- the impact of issues identified in the reports of statutory inspectorates, for example Ofsted;
- corporate governance issues;
- financial sustainability concerns; and
- procurement/contract management issues.

All the opinions issued to date in relation to bodies’ financial statements are unqualified, as was the case for the 2016/17 accounts.

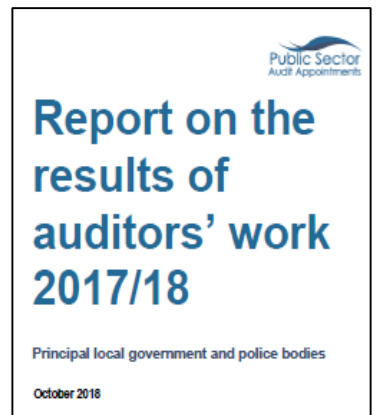
The report is available on the PSAA website:

<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/reports-on-the-results-of-auditors-work/>

PSAA Report

Challenge question:

Has your Authority identified improvements to be made to the 2018/19 financial statements audit and Value for Money Conclusion?



National Audit Office – Local auditor reporting in England 2018

The report describes the roles and responsibilities of local auditors and relevant national bodies in relation to the local audit framework and summarises the main findings reported by local auditors in 2017-18. It also considers how the quantity and nature of the issues reported have changed since the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) took up his new responsibilities in 2015, and highlights differences between the local government and NHS sectors.

Given increasing financial and demand pressures on local bodies, they need strong arrangements to manage finances and secure value for money. External auditors have a key role in determining whether these arrangements are strong enough. The fact that only three of the bodies (5%) the NAO contacted in connection with this study were able to confirm that they had fully implemented their plans to address the weaknesses reported suggests that while auditors are increasingly raising red flags, some of these are met with inadequate or complacent responses.

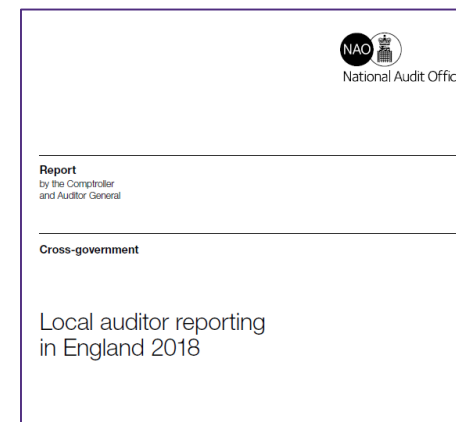
Qualified conclusions on arrangements to secure value for money locally are both unacceptably high and increasing. Auditors qualified their conclusions on arrangements to secure value for money at an increasing number of local public bodies: up from 170 (18%) in 2015-16 to 208 (22%) in 2017-18. As at 17 December 2018, auditors have yet to issue 20 conclusions on arrangements to secure value for money, so this number may increase further for 2017-18.

The proportion of local public bodies whose plans for keeping spending within budget are not fit-for-purpose, or who have significant weaknesses in their governance, is too high. This is a risk to public money and undermines confidence in how well local services are managed. Local bodies need to demonstrate to the wider public that they are managing their organisations effectively, and take local auditor reports seriously. Those charged with governance need to hold their executives to account for taking prompt and effective action. Local public bodies need to do more to strengthen their arrangements and improve their performance.

Local auditors need to exercise the full range of their additional reporting powers, where this is the most effective way of highlighting concerns, especially where they consider that local bodies are not taking sufficient action. Departments need to continue monitoring the level and nature of non-standard reporting, and formalise their processes where informal arrangements are in place. The current situation is serious, with trend lines pointing downwards.

The report is available on the NAO website:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-auditor-reporting-in-england-2018/>



NAO Report

Challenge question:

Has your Authority responded appropriately to any concerns or issues raised in the External Auditor's report for 2017/18?



ICAEW Report: expectations gap

The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) has published a paper on the 'expectation gap' in the external audit of public bodies.

Context:

The expectation gap is the difference between what an auditor actually does, and what stakeholders and commentators think the auditors obligations might be and what they might do. Greater debate being whether greater education and communication between auditors and stakeholders should occur rather than substantial changes in role and remit of audit.

What's the problem?

- **Short-term solvency vs. Longer-term value:**
 - LG & NHS: Facing financial pressures, oversight & governance pressures
- **Limited usefulness of auditors reports:** 'The VFM conclusion is helpful, but it is more about the system/arrangements in place rather than the actual effectiveness of value for money'
- **Other powers and duties:** implementing public interest reports in addition to VFM
- **Restricted role of questions and objections:** Misunderstanding over any objections/and or question should be resolved by the local public auditor. Lack of understanding that auditors have discretion in the use of their powers.
- **Audit qualification not always acted on by those charged with governance:** 'if independent public audit is to have the impact that it needs, it has to be taken seriously by those charged with governance'
- **Audit committees not consistently effective:** Local government struggles to recruit external members for their audit committees, they do not always have the required competencies and independence.
- **Decreased audit fees:** firms choose not to participate because considered that the margins were too tight to enable them to carry out a sufficient amount of work within the fee scales.
- **Impact of audit independence rules:** new independence rules don't allow for external auditors to take on additional work that could compromise their external audit role
- **Other stakeholders expectations not aligned with audit standards**

- **Increased auditor liability:** an auditor considering reporting outside of the main audit engagement would need to bill their client separately and expect the client to pay.

Future financial viability of local public bodies

Local public bodies are being asked to deliver more with less and be more innovative and commercial. CFOs are, of course, nervous at taking risks in the current environment and therefore would like more involvement by their auditors. They want auditors to challenge their forward-looking plans and assumptions and comment on the financial resilience of the organisation..

The ICAEW puts forward two solutions:

Solution a) If CFO's want additional advisory work, rather than just the audit, they can separately hire consultants (either accountancy firms not providing the statutory audit or other business advisory organisations with the required competencies) to work alongside them in their financial resilience work and challenging budget assumptions.

Solution b) Wider profession (IFAC, IAASB, accountancy bodies) should consider whether audit, in its current form, is sustainable and fit for purpose. Stakeholders want greater assurance, through greater depth of testing, analysis and more detailed reporting of financial matters. It is perhaps, time to look at the wider scope of audit. For example, could there be more value in auditors providing assurance reports on key risk indicators which have a greater future-looking focus, albeit focused on historic data?

More information can be found in the link below (click on the cover page)



The expectations gap

Challenge question:

How effectively is the audit meeting client expectations?



Brexit Room - Increasing readiness and resilience within your locality

Public service organisations have always navigated uncertainty and faced challenges on behalf of communities and this role has never been more important than now. Whilst the outcome of Brexit remains uncertain at a national level, it is essential for organisations to set a path to ensure the continued delivery of vital services and the best possible outcomes for their local communities and economies. Whatever happens over the coming weeks and months, it is important that organisations identify key Brexit scenarios and use these to frame robust local contingency plans.

From our conversations with the sector we know that public service organisations are at different stages in their preparation for this big change.

Here's a brief summary of the issues that we are seeing:

Organisations

- Engaging non-EEA nationals within the workforce to ensure they understand their residency rights and are not receiving incorrect information from other sources
- Loss of access to key EU databases on policing and trading standards and changes to data sharing arrangements
- Uncertainty around continuation of EU funding beyond 2020 and the implementation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Services and suppliers

- Engaging with key suppliers to assess their risk profiles and resilience
- Dealing with the immediate strain on key services such as social care and trading standards
- Potential disruption to live procurement activities and uncertainty around the national procurement rulebook post OJEU.

Place

- Considering scenarios for economic shock, the associated social impact in the short, medium and long-term and the potential impact on public sector organisation financial resilience
- Potential impacts on major local employers, key infrastructure investment programmes and transport improvements
- Civil contingencies and providing reassurance and support to residents and businesses.

Our approach

The Brexit Room is a flexible and interactive half-day workshop designed to sharpen your thinking on the impact Brexit could have on:

Your organisation – including considerations on workforce, funding, and changes to legislation

Your services and suppliers – ensuring that critical services are protected and building resilience within supply chains

Your place – using our proprietary Place Analytics tools we will help you to understand potential impacts on your local communities and economy and develop a place-based response, working with partners where appropriate.

We can work with you to identify key risks and opportunities in each of these areas whilst building consensus on the priority actions to be taken forward. You will receive a concise and focused write-up of the discussion and action plan to help shape the next stages of your work on Brexit.

For more information, follow the link below:

<https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/brexit-local-leadership-on-the-front-line/>

Brexit

Challenge question:

How well advanced are your Authority's plans for Brexit?



Links

Grant Thornton

<https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/>

<http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/industries/publicsector>

National Audit Office

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-auditor-reporting-in-england-2018/>

Public Sector Audit Appointments

<https://www.psaa.co.uk/audit-quality/reports-on-the-results-of-auditors-work/>

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12 April 2019

Dear Amy

Planned audit fee for 2019/20

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) provides the framework for local public audit. Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) has been specified as an appointing person under the Act and the Local Authority (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 and had the power to make auditor appointments for audits of opted-in local government bodies from 2018/19. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority is an opted-in body.

For opted-in bodies PSAA's responsibilities also include setting fees and monitoring the quality of auditors' work. Further information on PSAA and its responsibilities are available on the [PSAA website](#).

Scale fee

PSAA published the 2019/20 scale fees for opted-in bodies at the end of March 2019, following a consultation process. Individual scale fees have been maintained at the same level as in 2018/19, unless there were specific circumstances which required otherwise. Further details are set out on the [PSAA website](#). The scale fee for the Fire Authority for 2019/20 has been set by PSAA at £26,041, which is the same as in 2018/19.

PSAA prescribes that 'scale fees are based on the expectation that audited bodies are able to provide the auditor with complete and materially accurate financial statements, with supporting working papers, within agreed timeframes'.

The audit planning process for 2019/20, including the risk assessment, will continue as the year progresses and fees will be reviewed and updated as necessary as our work progresses.

Scope of the audit fee

There are no changes to the overall work programme for audits of local government audited bodies for 2019/20. Under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office (NAO) is responsible for publishing the statutory Code of Audit Practice and guidance for auditors. Audits of the accounts for 2019/20 will be undertaken under this Code. Further information on the NAO Code and guidance is available on the [NAO website](#).

The scale fee covers:

- our audit of your financial statements;
- our work to reach a conclusion on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion); and
- our work on your whole of government accounts return (if applicable).

PSAA will agree fees for considering objections from the point at which auditors accept an objection as valid, or any special investigations, as a variation to the scale fee.

Value for Money conclusion

The Code requires us to consider whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VfM) conclusion.

The NAO issued its latest guidance for auditors on value for money work in November 2017. The guidance states that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Authority has put proper arrangements in place.

The NAO guidance identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

Billing schedule

Fees will be billed as follows:

Audit fee	£
September 2019	6,510.25
December 2019	6,510.25
March 2020	6,510.25
June 2020	6,510.25
Total	26,041.00

Outline audit timetable

We will undertake our audit planning and interim audit procedures in November to February. Upon completion of this phase of our work we will issue a detailed audit plan setting out our findings and details of our audit approach. Our final accounts audit and work on the VfM conclusion will be completed in June and July and work on the whole of government accounts return in July.

Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
Audit planning and interim audit	November to January – planning January to February - interim	Audit Plan	The plan summarises the findings of our audit planning and our approach to the audit of the Authority's accounts and VfM arrangements.
Final accounts audit	June to July	Audit Findings Report (to those charged with governance)	This report sets out the findings of our accounts audit and VfM work for the consideration of those charged with governance.
VfM conclusion	January to April	Audit Findings Report (to those charged with governance)	As above

Phase of work	Timing	Outputs	Comments
Whole of government accounts	July	Opinion on the WGA return	This work will be completed alongside the accounts audit.
Annual audit letter	September	Annual Audit Letter to the Authority	The letter will summarise the findings of all aspects of our work.

Our team

The key members of the audit team for 2019/20 are:

	Name	Phone Number	E-mail
Engagement Lead	Barrie Morris	0117 305 7708	barrie.morris@uk.gt.com
Engagement Manager	Aditi Chandramouli	0117 305 7643	aditi.chandramouli@uk.gt.com

Additional work

The scale fee excludes any work the Authority may request that we may agree to undertake outside of our Code audit. Any additional work will be separately agreed, and a detailed project specification and fee agreed with the Authority.

Quality assurance

We are committed to providing you with a high quality service. If you are in any way dissatisfied or would like to discuss how we can improve our service, please contact me in the first instance. Alternatively, you may wish to contact Jon Roberts, our Public Sector Assurance regional lead partner, via jon.roberts@uk.gt.com.

Yours sincerely



Barrie Morris
Engagement Lead
Grant Thornton UK LLP

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**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AMY WEBB
**Director of Finance (and Treasurer to
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue
Authority)**

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Service Headquarters
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Your ref :
Our ref :
Website : www.dsfire.gov.uk

Date : 10 May 2019
Please ask for : Amy Webb
Email : awebb@dsfire.gov.uk

Telephone : 01392 872200
Fax : 01392 872300
Direct telephone : 01392 872203

Dear Barrie,

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019

I refer to your letter dated 29 January 2019 relating to your need, under International Auditing Standards, to better understand the management processes in place to prevent cases of fraud and corruption and compliance with laws and regulation, and provide as Appendix A my responses to the specific requests that you have made.

In providing such responses I provide further information relating to a summary of evidence that I have relied on to inform my responses, and the sources of assurance that I have that the relevant management controls have operated effectively through the financial year to date and will operate up to the date the accounts are approved.

Summary of Evidence

- Compliance with Whistle Blowing Policy.
- Results of National Fraud Initiative.
- Information provided by statutory officers of Treasurer and Monitoring Officer with responsibility to ensure that the business of the Service is conducted within the law.
- Inter Authority Agreement relating to the provision of Legal, Governance and other services with Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council and Cornwall Council.
- Compliance with Fraud and Corruption Policy encouraging high standards of conduct and integrity.
- Reports to Executive Board of suspicion of fraudulent activity.
- Internal and external audit reports.
- Compliance with Authority Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegations and Contract Standing Orders.
- Review of Anti-Fraud and Corruption Arrangements 2011.
- Monitoring of issues of fraud and corruption from Risk and Insurance Officer.
- Establishment of new internal Self-Assessment process/toolkit –FRA Member approved and endorsed by Grant Thornton/Devon Audit Partnership

Sources of Assurance

- Application of robust internal controls being applied to transactions throughout the organisation e.g. separation of duties, authorised signatory lists, all payments over £20,000 are subject to Authorised bank signatory before released.
- Executive Board members review of all supplier payments over £50,000 on a quarterly basis.
- All year-end journal entries processed by central finance team and reviewed.
- New suppliers/debtors can only be set up by central finance team.
- Analytical review of figures with previous year.
- Regular reconciliation processes in place e.g. monthly bank reconciliation, payroll, purchase ledger, sales ledger, and cash management ledger.
- Annual Internal Audit review of financial systems and transactions.
- Annual Statement of Assurance.

I trust that this provides you with the key information required for you to obtain the necessary understanding of the position in my Authority but please come back to me if there is anything further that might assist you.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Webb
Director of Finance (and Treasurer to Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

Responses from Management:

Auditor question	Response
<p>What do you regard as the key events or issues that will have a significant impact on the financial statements for 2018/19?</p>	<p>Changes to the CIPFA code in regards to preparation of the year-end financial statements.</p> <p>Greater reliance on estimates arising from early close down as dictated by the Accounts and Audit regulations 2015.</p> <p>Basis of calculation for Provisions including doubtful debts.</p> <p>Changes to Pensions and Payroll providers in year have necessitated further reconciliation work to ensure that accurate information is included in the ledger.</p>
<p>Have you considered the appropriateness of the accounting policies adopted by the Authority? Have there been any events or transactions that may cause you to change or adopt new accounting policies?</p>	<p>Yes. No changes identified.</p>
<p>Are you aware of any changes to the Authority's regulatory environment that may have a significant impact on the Authority's financial statements?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>How would you assess the quality of the Authority's internal control processes?</p>	<p>I would assess as good and fit for purpose and Internal Audit reports for 2018/19 have assessed Key Financial Systems controls as a "good standard". Recommendations to improve the control environment will be evaluated and actioned.</p>
<p>How would you assess the process for reviewing the effectiveness of internal control?</p>	<p>The Annual Assurance Report is drafted, incorporating outcomes from the annual audit plan, by the Risk and Assurance manager who then circulates to relevant stakeholders to feedback.</p> <p>Monitoring of issues of fraud and corruption identified.</p> <p>Reliance on outcomes from internal and external audit reports.</p> <p>Regular review of process effectiveness via team meetings and escalation of issues to departmental/corporate risk registers where appropriate.</p>
<p>How do the Authority's risk management processes link to financial reporting?</p>	<p>Representation on the Corporate Governance Group of members of Risk and Insurance Team and Finance.</p> <p>Where risks are identified which cannot be immediately mitigated these are monitored via departmental risk registers and internal/external audit function. A process exists to escalate any corporate risks to senior management and APRC.</p>

<p>How would you assess the Authority's arrangements for identifying and responding to the risk of fraud?</p>	<p>Annual review of Authority Governance Documents, including Strategy on the Prevention and Detection of fraud and corruption.</p> <p>Monitoring of issues of fraud and corruption identified through the work of the Insurance and Risk Team, membership of Anti-fraud networks including notifications provided by our Internal Auditors, participation in the National Fraud Initiative.</p> <p>Periodic review of Anti-Fraud and Corruption arrangements.</p> <p>Recognised process in place when notified of Supplier bank changes.</p> <p>Information Assurance and ICT security functions ensure internal communications are made available regarding phishing emails, of which there is an increasing frequency.</p>
<p>What has been the outcome of these arrangements so far this year?</p>	<p>No changes to existing documents or fraud identified.</p>
<p>What have you determined to be the classes of accounts, transactions and disclosures most at risk to fraud?</p>	<p>Payroll costs relating to On Call staff, approx. £12m per annum, includes some elements that are paid by claims on a pay-as-you-go basis.</p> <p>Without robust internal control arrangements this area of spend could be subject to abuse from fraud. Loss of Earnings claims by personnel is an area where previous cases of dishonest/fraudulent claims have been identified.</p> <p>The Authority is regularly targeted by bogus emails regarding cash transfers and change to supplier account details. Effective internal processes are in place to ensure that these are identified and challenged.</p>
<p>Are you aware of any whistle blowing potential or complaints by potential whistle blowers? If so, what has been your response?</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer is aware of two whistleblowing matters. An external investigation is being undertaken which is expected to have completed by APRC in May.</p> <p>The second relates to alleged unauthorised use of Service equipment.</p>
<p>Have any reports been made under the Bribery Act?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>As a management team, how do you communicate risk issues (including fraud) to those charged with governance?</p>	<p>The Strategy on Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption Document includes reporting arrangements for cases of suspected fraud, including reporting to Members of the Authority.</p> <p>Internal Audit reports to the Audit and Performance Review Committee will include any suspected fraud cases.</p> <p>A process exists to escalate any corporate risks to senior management and APRC.</p>

As a management team, how do you communicate to staff and employees your views on business practices and ethical behaviour?	Whistle blowing policy and anti-fraud and corruption policy encourages staff to speak up, and identifies action to take in cases of suspected fraudulent activity. Publication of Core Values. There is an ongoing project to establish a new appraisal system which will further link the Core Values to performance.
What are your policies and procedures for identifying, assessing and accounting for litigation and claims?	Risk and Insurance Team headed by the Insurance and Risk Manager holds responsibility for assessing potential litigation and claims against the Service. Issues of a national nature are often identified and reported through the Fire Lawyers Network and the Fire Finance Network. As members of these groups, issues that may impact on the Authority are identified and reported.
Is there any use of financial instruments, including derivatives?	None other than the routine instruments such as debtors and creditors as disclosed in the Financial Statements.
Are you aware of any significant transaction outside the normal course of business?	No
Are you aware of any changes in circumstances that would lead to impairment of non-current assets?	No
Are you aware of any guarantee contracts?	No
Are you aware of allegations of fraud, errors, or other irregularities during the period?	We have been contacted by the Police in regards to one potential case of fraud and are assisting with their enquiries. A further case of potential fraud has recently been identified as is in the process of being investigated.
Are you aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws or regulations or is the Authority on notice of any such possible instances of non-compliance?	As reported last year, there was an issue over taxation of injury on duty/ ill health retirement being subject to income tax which has now been resolved.
Have there been any examinations, investigations or inquiries by any licensing or authorising bodies or the tax and customs authorities?	HMRC has conducted an examination of Officer Vehicle policies, procedures and has confirmed compliance.
Are you aware of any transactions, events and conditions (or changes in these) that may give rise to recognition or disclosure of significant accounting estimates that require significant judgement?	None other than those critical judgements included in the Financial Statements.

<p>Where the financial statements include amounts based on significant estimates, how have the accounting estimates been made, what is the nature of the data used, and the degree of estimate uncertainty inherent in the estimate?</p>	<p>Amounts included in the Financial Statements as Provisions:</p> <p>Pension Liability – the estimated liability has been assessed on the basis of potential claims. This assessment is based upon a “likely scenario” but carries some element of risk that more claimants come forward than estimated.</p> <p>The use of estimates for operating expenditure and pension fund – Due to shortening timescales for production of the Financial Statements, greater reliance will be placed on the use of estimates particularly regarding pension funds for fire fighters and the local government schemes, where 11 months of data will be used to inform the actuarial report. Estimates have been reviewed for appropriateness at interim audit and agreed with the auditor and will be documented where used in the financial statements.</p>
<p>Are you aware of the existence of loss contingencies and/or un-asserted claims that may affect the financial statements?</p>	<p>The insurance mutual that we are part of, FRIC, holds a reserve fund in the event of significant future losses.</p>
<p>Although the public sector interpretation of IAS1 means that the financial services should be prepared on a going concern basis, management are required to consider whether there are any material uncertainties that cast doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a business. What is the process for undertaking a rigorous assessment of the going concern? Is the process carried out proportionate in nature and depth to the level of financial risk and complexity of the organisation and its operations? How will you ensure that all available information is considered when concluding the organisation is a going concern at the date the financial statements are approved?</p>	<p>Several pieces of work have been undertaken during the year which support analysis of the Authority's operation as a going concern.</p> <p>The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has forecast funding levels for the next five years to inform future planning and has been enhanced with scenarios.</p> <p>Reserves and Capital Strategies have been produced.</p> <p>The Safer Together change programme is developing a benefits realisation plan and operating model which can be flexed to various budget scenarios.</p> <p>No critical risks around the ability of the Service to continue to operate as a going concern in this period have been identified. We will ensure that the going concern review follows a well defined process to capture risks and that this is presented to those charged with governance.</p>

<p>What is the position on the prior year's reported internal control deficiencies i.e. the issues raised in the Audit Findings Report?</p>	<p>Evidence trail to support the approval of an exit package – The approval was formally resolved on 30 July 2018. Where required to evidence a decision, confidential minutes are produced for every Part 2 item of the Authority or its committees.</p>
<p>Other than in house solicitors, can you provide details of those solicitors utilised by the Authority during the year. Please indicate where they are working on open litigation or contingencies from prior years?</p>	<p>The Authority does not employ in-house solicitors but engages in-house solicitors employed by Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council and Cornwall Council, under the provisions of an inter-authority legal agreement. These provide advice and/or litigation support (as required) on a range of issues including employment law, fire safety enforcement action, property and constitutional law. Plymouth City Council is currently engaged on a number of Employment Tribunal cases.</p> <p>Foot Anstey Solicitors has been engaged to provide advice on commercial trading matters.</p>
<p>Can you provide details of other advisors consulted during the year and the issue on which they were consulted?</p>	<p>Quantuma – Assurance over Red One Business Plan</p>
<p>Have any of the Authority's service providers reported any items of fraud, non-compliance with laws and regulations or uncorrected misstatements which would affect the financial statements?</p>	<p>No</p>

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**Councillor Mark Healey MBE
AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW
COMMITTEE CHAIR**

**B. Morris Esq.
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Website : www.dsfire.gov.uk

Date : 10 May 2019
Please ask for : Mark Healey
Email : mhealey@somerset.gov.uk

Telephone : 01278 685368

Dear Barrie,

**Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2019**

I refer to your letter dated 29 January 2019 requesting information from me as the Chair of the Audit and Performance Review Committee in order to provide you with a better understanding of how the Committee gains assurances over management processes and arrangements. Please find attached as Appendix A, the Committee's responses to each of the specific questions that you have raised.

I trust that this provides you with the necessary but please come back to me if there is anything further that might assist you.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Mark Healey MBE
Chair, Audit and Performance Review Committee.
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority

Response from Audit and Performance Review Committee Chair

Fraud risk assessment

Auditor Question	Response
Has the Authority assessed the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements due to fraud?	Yes
What are the results of this process?	No issues identified.
What processes does the Authority have in place to identify and respond to risks of fraud?	<p>Strategy for the Detection of Fraud and Corruption.</p> <p>Whistleblowing Code (Confidential Reporting Policy).</p> <p>National Fraud Initiative.</p> <p>Risk and Insurance Officer.</p> <p>Appointment of Statutory Officers of Treasurer and Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Internal and External Audit scrutiny.</p> <p>Periodic review of anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.</p> <p>Budget monitoring.</p> <p>Appropriate controls to enforce segregation of duties.</p> <p>Relevant training and awareness raising for managers and other staff.</p> <p>Publication of Transparency Fraud Report.</p>
Have any specific fraud risks, or areas with a high risk of fraud, been identified and what has been done to mitigate these risks?	<p>Payroll costs – subject to internal and external audit regime including the sign off of transactions and claims.</p> <p>Supplier bank details – process in place to ensure change requests are confirmed externally before being actioned, subject to internal audit.</p>
Are internal controls, including segregation of duties, in place and operating effectively?	<p>Yes.</p> <p>There is currently an outstanding action from the (draft) internal audit report and 2016/17 external audit report regarding dual authorisation of electronic journals. As the supplier of the finance system is currently unable to facilitate electronic sign off a manual process is in place to mitigate the risk on a sample basis.</p>
If not, where are the risk areas and what mitigating actions have been taken?	As above
Are there any areas where there is a potential for override of controls or inappropriate influence over the financial reporting process (for example because of undue pressure to achieve financial targets)?	None that I have been made aware of.

<p>Are there any areas where there is a potential for misreporting?</p>	<p>None that I have been made aware of.</p>
<p>How does the Audit and Performance Review Committee exercise oversight over management's processes for identifying and responding to risks of fraud?</p>	<p>Assurances received from Internal and External Audit reports relating to the robustness of internal control procedures, and potential areas of weakness. Assurances from the Treasurer in relation to potential mis-statements of the Accounts. Review of draft and publication of Annual Statement of Assurance. Reporting requirements as laid down within the approved Whistleblowing Code. Reporting requirements as laid down within the approved Fraud and Corruption Policy. Reports from the annual National Fraud Initiative exercise. Reports from Internal Audit investigations. Reports from the Treasurer of any suspected issues of fraud. Fraud and Corruption Risk Assessment carried out by the Risk and Review Manager.</p>
<p>What arrangements are in place to report fraud issues and risks to the Audit and Performance Review Committee?</p>	<p>Reporting requirements as laid down within the approved Whistleblowing Code. Reporting requirements as laid down within the approved Strategy on the Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption. Reports from the annual National Fraud Initiative exercise. Reports from Internal Audit investigations. Reports from the Treasurer of any suspected issues of fraud.</p>
<p>How does the Authority communicate and encourage ethical behaviour of its staff and contractors?</p>	<p>Corporate Governance Code Members Code of Conduct. Management and professional training. Publication of Core Values and development of underpinning behavioural expectations through the appraisal process</p>
<p>How do you encourage staff to report their concerns about fraud? Have any significant issues been reported?</p>	<p>Strategy on the Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption encouraging high standards of conduct and integrity. Whistleblowing Code.</p> <p>A whistleblowing allegation was progressed to independent investigation but has resulted in no further disciplinary action</p>
<p>Are you aware of any related party relationships or transactions that could give rise to risks of fraud?</p>	<p>No</p>

Are you aware of any instances of actual, suspected or alleged, fraud, either within the Authority since 1 April 2018?	There is an ongoing police investigation in to a suspected case of fraud which has not yet been concluded.
--	--

Law and regulation

Auditor Question	Response
What arrangements does the Authority have in place to prevent and detect non-compliance with laws and regulations?	<p>The appointment of suitably qualified and experienced Treasurer, Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Authority to provide assurance to the Committee that the business of the Service is conducted within the law, and to advise the Committee where there may be potential for the Authority to acting ultra vires.</p> <p>Reliance that reports from the Chief Fire Officer contain sufficient information to provide assurance to the Committee that legal implications have been considered, before decisions are made.</p> <p>The use of professional legal advisors.</p> <p>External and internal audit reporting.</p> <p>The use of professional tax and VAT advisors.</p>
How does management gain assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?	<p>Both the Treasurer and Monitoring Officer are members of the Executive Board.</p> <p>Professionally qualified subject matter experts are employed as Heads of Department and are members of the Service Leadership Team e.g. HR, Finance, Procurement.</p> <p>Publication of Annual Statement of Assurance.</p>
How is the Audit and Performance Review Committee provided with assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?	<p>The appointment of suitably qualified and experienced Treasurer, Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Authority to provide assurance to the Committee that the business of the Service is conducted within the law, and to advise the Committee where there may be potential for the Authority to acting ultra vires.</p> <p>Reliance that reports from the Chief Fire Officer contain sufficient information to provide assurance to the Committee that legal implications have been considered, before decisions are made.</p> <p>The use of professional legal advisors.</p> <p>External and internal audit reporting.</p> <p>Publication of the Annual Statement of Assurance.</p>

	The use of professional tax and VAT advisors.
Have there been any instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with law and regulation since 1 April 2018?	Investigation in to compliance over the VAT treatment of Emergency Services Vehicles, an outcome is yet to be determined. Taxation of injury on duty/ ill health retirement being subject to income tax which is currently under review.
What arrangements does the Authority have in place to identify, evaluate and account for litigation or claims?	Risk and Insurance Team headed by the Risk and Insurance Officer holds responsibility for assessing potential litigation and claims against the Authority. As members of the Fire Lawyers Network and Fire Finance Network Group issues of a national nature that may impact on the Authority are reported. Evaluation of ongoing claims made as part of the year-end financial reporting process whereby an assessment is made on whether a financial provision required Financial outlays are dealt with in year where possible, the Authority holds a general reserve which could be used to fund provisions
Is there any actual or potential litigation or claims that would affect the financial statements?	There are two Employment Tribunal cases which are not considered to be material to the Authority's financial statements
Have there been any reports from other regulatory bodies, such as HM Revenues and Customs, which indicate non-compliance?	An issue with taxation of Ill Health and Injury Pensions has been resolved during 2018-19

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Agenda Item 7

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	APRC/19/4
MEETING	AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 MAY 2019
SUBJECT OF REPORT	AUDIT & REVIEW 2018-19 PROGRESS REPORT
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Attached for consideration and discussion is the 2018 – 19 annual Audit & Review report. This report sets out progress to date against the approved 2018-19 Internal Audit Plan, and updates on additional review work undertaken.</p> <p>The report provides assurance statements for the audits completed to date and records the progress against the approved Internal Audit Plan.</p> <p>Internal Audit activities across the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”) are managed through a shared service agreement that sees Audit & Review and the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) work together to deliver the Internal Audit Plan. Additionally this includes an overview of key assurance activities completed by other teams who contribute to the audit plan, such as Information Assurance, Operational Assurance, and Safety Assurance.</p> <p>The report provides an overview of the assurance tracking process and the current high priority recommendations that remain as ‘open’ on the assurance tracker.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Nil.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ASSESSMENT (ERBA)	Not applicable.
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Audit & Review 2018-19 Plan</p> <p>Audit & Review Service Policy</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The 2018-19 Internal Audit Plan was approved by this Committee at its meeting held on the 26 April 2018. The Plan sets out the combined scope of internal audit work to be completed by Audit & Review and the Devon Audit Partnership, and other assurance providing functions. The Audit planning process is shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2. Audit & Review and the Devon Audit Partnership are accountable for the delivery of the Plan and the policy includes the requirement to report progress to this Committee at least three times per year.
- 1.3. The key objective of this report is to provide the Committee with a progress report against the Plan.
- 1.4. The report includes the assurance statements for all audits completed during 2018-19.
- 1.5. The report also includes an overview of the assurance tracking process and the current high priority recommendations that remain as 'open' on the assurance tracker.

2. ASSURANCE STATEMENTS

- 2.1. One of the key roles of Internal Audit is to provide independent assurance as to how effectively risks are managed across the organisation.
- 2.2. The following assurance statements have been developed to evaluate and report audit conclusions:
 - ★★★★ High Standard
The system and controls in place adequately mitigate exposure to the risks identified. The system is being adhered to and substantial reliance can be placed upon the procedures in place. Only minor recommendations aimed at further enhancing already sound procedures.
 - ★★★ Good Standard
The systems and controls generally mitigate the risk identified but a few weaknesses have been identified and/or mitigating controls may not be fully applied. There are no significant matters arising from the audit and the recommendations made serve to strengthen what are mainly reliable procedures.
 - ★★ Improvements Required
In our opinion there are a number of instances where controls and procedures do not adequately mitigate the risks identified. Existing procedures need to be improved in order to ensure that they are fully reliable. Recommendations have been made to ensure that organisational objectives are not put at risk.
 - ★ Fundamental Weakness Identified
The risks identified are not being controlled and there is an increased likelihood that risks could occur. The matters arising from the audit are sufficiently significant to place doubt on the reliability of the procedures reviewed, to an extent that the objectives and/or resources of the Authority may be at risk, and the ability to deliver the service may be adversely affected. Implementation of the recommendations made is a priority.

3. PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2018-19 PLAN

- 3.1. The 2018-19 Internal Audit Plan has been assigned to the Audit & Review Manager, the Information Assurance Manager, the IT Security Officer, the Operational Assurance Manager, the Organisational Safety Manager, and the Risk & Insurance Manager.
- 3.2. To increase clarity on progress, audit phases have been added to Risk Based Audits.

Assurance Area	Progress	Assurance statement / Update
Operational Assurance		
Operational assurance (OpA) process captures information from operational activities, enables the identification of trends through a graphical dashboard and manage the resultant actions with the organisation. Actions are assigned a rating of safety critical, area of concern or notable practice. Actions are assigned to local risk managers and monitored to ensure improvements implemented.		
Operational Assurance	This is an area requiring continuous ongoing review to ensure compliance and organisational improvement	<p>Throughout the year 2018-19, a total of 2,528 Incidents were monitored. 410 of these incidents identified learning points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 safety critical (these were related to equipment failure, our interaction with technology, and communication channels) • 591 areas of concern. • 213 notable practice. <p>Learning points have been referred to the relevant teams to action.</p> <p>Trend analysis has been carried out by the OpA department and incorporated into the quarterly bulletin for organisational learning.</p> <p>438 programmed station visits were completed by flexi officers on targeted themes. These visits are to enhance learning identified through trend analysis, national learning and learning from other FRSs.</p>

Assurance Area	Progress	Assurance statement / Update
Data Protection/GDPR	This is an area requiring continuous ongoing review to ensure compliance and organisational improvement	Throughout 2018-19 the Information Assurance (IA) team have engaged with the organisation on how to recognise and report security events. This generated an expected increase in the number of events reported (see Appendix 2). Work will continue on this throughout 2019-20, as well as helping the organisation to refine their information security practices.
IT Health Check - Corporate	Complete	A Remedial Action Plan is in place and progress has been made by ICT.
IT Health Check - NFSP	Complete	A Remedial Action Plan is in place and Capita have actions in progress.
Code of Connection (Airwave/ESN)	Complete	The introduction of replacement MDT hardware counted as a significant change under the Airwave Code of Connection and the Airwave Accreditor has approved our Code of Connection for the new MDT. ESN has introduced new requirements as a part of an Architectural Pattern document, these are subject to ongoing review with the partnership.
ISO 27001 Alignment	Evidence / Information Gathering Phase	Good progress has been made in Q4 with gathering evidence of ISO27001 alignment. The ICT Security policies have been reviewed and republished.
Procurement Process for Internal audit providers	Complete	Devon Audit Partnership has been awarded a 3 year contract from 1 st April 2019.
LGA Peer Review : Update report	Complete	★★★ Good Standard 49% of the actions from this review have been closed as completed, or duplication of other actions or work already in progress. 20% are being addressed by the Safer Together Programme, and 7% by our Digital Transformation strategy. 11% are being addressed through policy and strategy updates, which are in progress.

Assurance Area	Progress	Assurance statement / Update
		<p>7% of the actions are being currently addressed by other ongoing work within departments.</p> <p>2% are addressed by the Fire & Rescue plan and 2% by "Training 4 Competence".</p> <p>The remaining 2% of actions are open, however are low priority actions which require significant resource. A review will be completed in the next quarter as to whether the mitigation will outweigh the risk.</p>
Fire Control Review : Update report (High-level)	Complete	<p>★★★ Good Standard</p> <p>A review of actions for Fire Control following an investigation into "the Sussex Road incident" determined that 76% of the actions had been completed, with 20.5% forming ongoing work, and the remaining 3.5% becoming redundant since ways of working have changed. A good level of assurance could be given that actions were all addressed, and further work on this will take place in 2019.</p>
Fire Control Review : Update report (Detailed review)	Evidence / Information Gathering Phase	<p>The results of the High-level fire control review prompted a more detailed review into specific findings (based on staff changes, and previous reports). This will be completed Q1 2019-20.</p>
National Fraud Initiative	Review Phase	<p>This is a mandatory initiative for public sector organisations, and is owned by the Cabinet Office.</p>
NFCC H&S Assessment	Complete	<p>The NFCC assessment requires a different grading. This is rated as "Working Towards" (second on a three point scale), with our self-assessment being validated by Devon Audit Partnership.</p> <p>Feedback on the process will be collated during Q1 2019-20 to provide to NFCC, and drive improvement in the process.</p>
Community Safety: Education activity audit	Complete	<p>★★ Improvements Required</p> <p>Issues identified have been addressed by Community safety strategy, and centralisation of processes.</p>

Assurance Area	Progress	Assurance statement / Update
Training for Competence: Evaluation review	Complete	★★★ Good Standard Staff had opportunity to provide feedback, which was used to develop approached, and opportunities existed to improve feedback mechanisms.
Cultural Audit	Complete	★★ Improvements Required Further work will be completed during 2019-20 based on the outcome of this report. Areas which will be looked into include empowerment, decision making, and Bullying & Harassment.
Contract Management	Evidence / Information Gathering Phase	Further investigation has been required into transactional data, this will be completed during Q1 2019-20.
Pension Board Governance Arrangements review	Complete	★★★ Good Standard The Governance arrangements in place were found to be robust and supported by officer-led processes and self-assessment
Key Financial Systems 2018-19	Complete	★★★ Good Standard Accurate data, well managed accounting system and defined treasury management approach.
Pensions and payroll handover process	Draft Report	★★★ Good Standard Both projects were effectively managed, with good information security consideration.
Payroll 2018-19	Draft Report	★★★ Good Standard New payroll system and processes are robust, but small team size presents challenges, and system password requirements are to be revised.
GDPR Strategic Review	Complete	★★ Improvements Required Information Assurance team are able to demonstrate good level of knowledge and expertise. There are some amendments required to recording of data processing activity and ongoing work improving privacy notices, is scheduled for 2019-20.

Action Planning

- 3.3. All issues have been discussed with the Lead Officers and Audit & Review are pleased to report that suitable action plans have been agreed to improve the management of any risks identified.

3.4. All agreed actions are captured and monitored through the assurance tracking process (see paragraph below), and where relevant, will be reflected in either department plans (if incremental improvement) or the Change & Improvement Plan (if strategic).

4. WHAT HAPPENS WITH AUDIT & REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. The Audit & Review Assurance Tracking system records all recommendations and agreed actions coming out of key assurance activities. The system tracks recommendations at the following assurance levels:

- External reviews (including External audit)
- Annual Statement of Assurance
- Internal Audit (Audit & Review and Devon Audit Partnership)
- Operational Assurance
- EFQM
- Peer Review
- ICT Health Checks
- Security Events

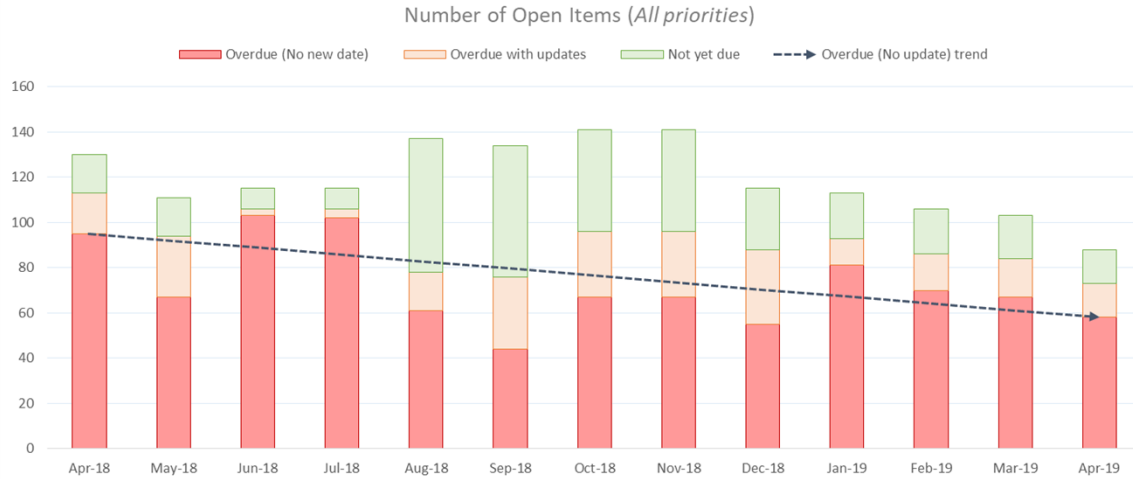
4.2. The Assurance Tracker is available to all employees through the Service Information Point (SIP) and will be made available to the public in the future to fall in line with the new draft Fire & Rescue National Framework document.

4.3. A quarterly update procedure has been embedded that sees the export and distribution of outstanding recommendations to service managers to provide an update. This has been aligned to the Corporate Planning process to ensure outstanding recommendations are reviewed alongside departmental plans.

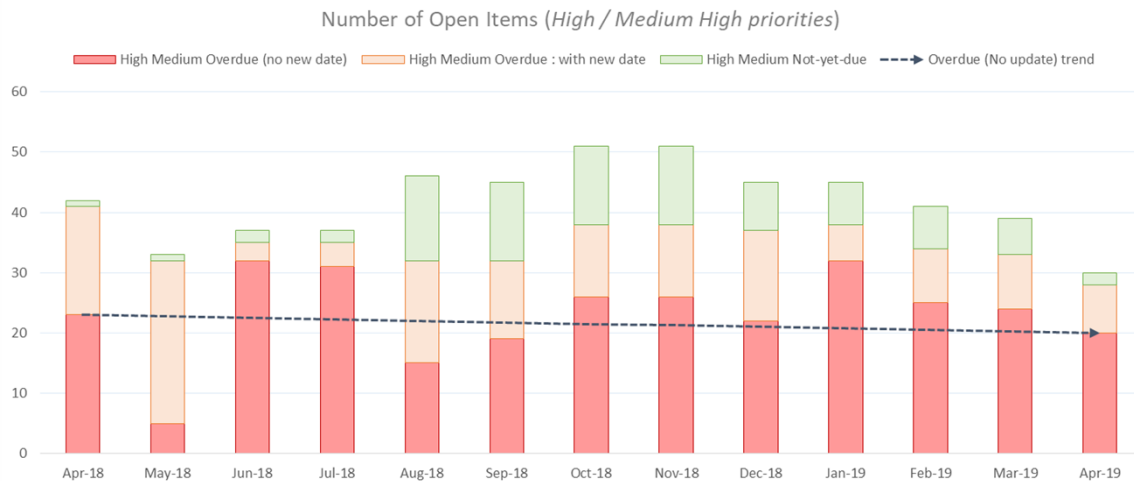
4.4. The inclusion of additional assurance activity, such as ICT health checks, safety and security events, has seen an overall increase in the total number of open actions. However, even with the additional assurance actions, since April 2018, a 39% decrease has been seen in overdue recommendations with no update, to 58 (95 reported in April 2018). Updates are being focussed on the higher priority items, however the overall trend in all priority of open items, continues to decrease. As at April 2019, refer to illustrated Graph 1 and Graph 2 below.

4.5. The overdue actions are largely linked to longer term project work that remain on-going and are monitored through the assurance tracking process.

4.6. Additionally, open actions have been superseded by changes to the service structure, digital transformation and other actions. Further work is ongoing to ensure that actions that have been superseded are documented and recorded as closed.



Graph 2: Open recommendations (all priorities)

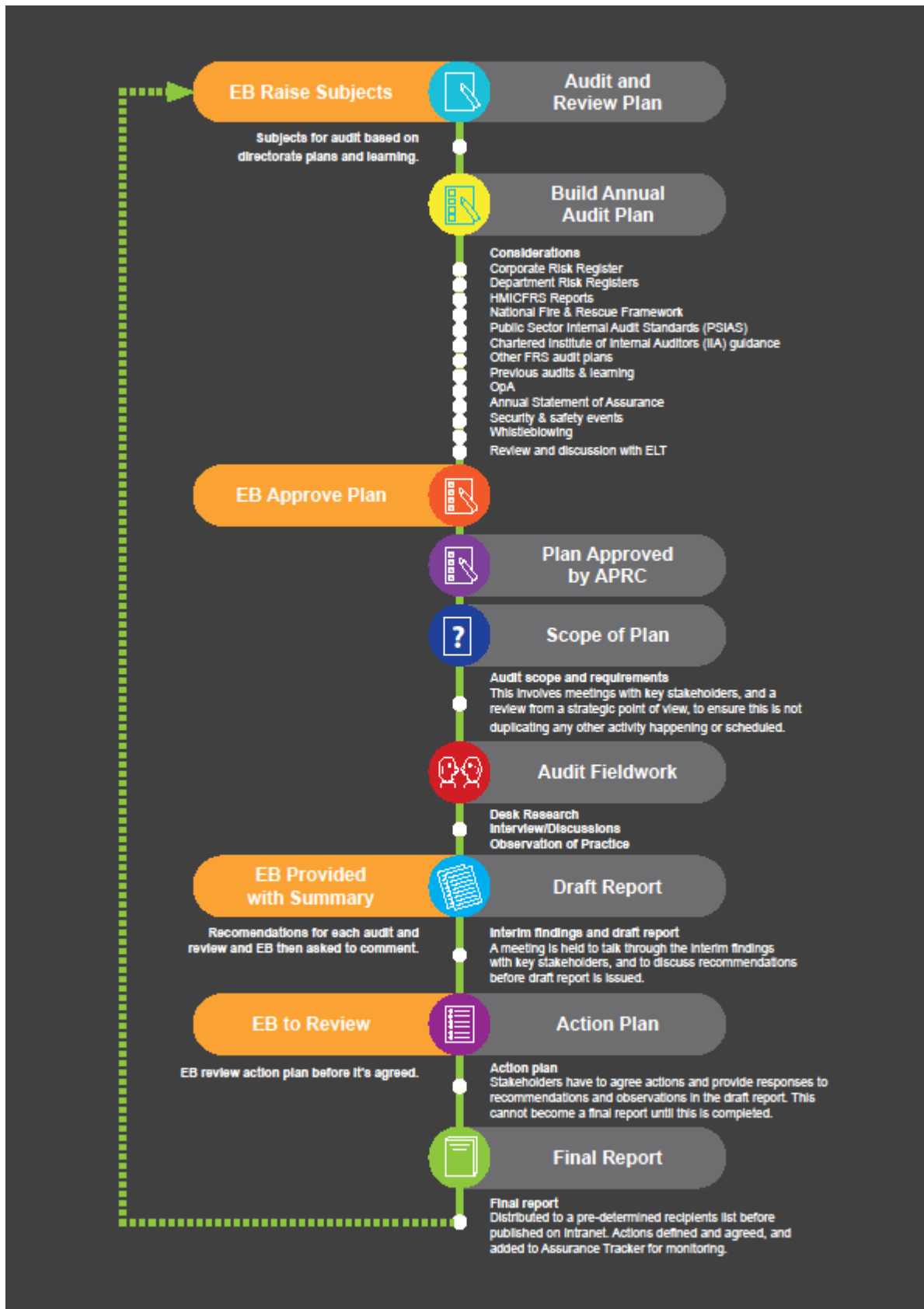


Graph 3: Open recommendations (High/Med High priority)

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

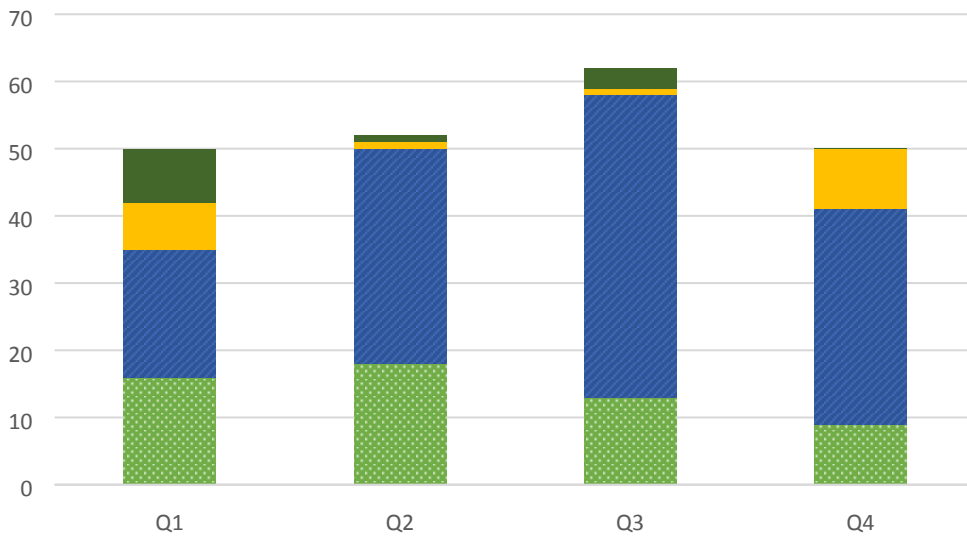
- 5.1. Based on the work completed to date in this year and knowledge from previous years, the systems in operation within Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service continue to demonstrate a good level of internal control.
- 5.2. Both Audit & Review and the Devon Audit Partnership would wish to use this report to thank all staff who have worked with them in delivering the audit programme and the willingness to positively engage in the audit process.
- 5.3. The progress made against the agreed Audit Plan will be reported back to this Committee at regular intervals.

ACFO PETE BOND
Director of Service Improvement



2018-19 Security Events

Information Personnel Physical Technical



Security Events (by type) by Quarter 2018-19

Agenda Item 8

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	APRC/19/5
MEETING	AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 May 2019
SUBJECT OF REPORT	2019-20 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT (ACFO PETER BOND)
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan as appended to this report be approved.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>As the Service commences its extensive programme of change and improvement over the years to come, it is important that it measures the impact of that change to ensure that Strategic Plans are achieved.</p> <p>Although each change project will include an element of benefits realisation by the programme board and benefits owner, over the coming years the Service seek to use audit and review much more to help it understand the impact it is having within those areas of improvement.</p> <p>Audit also serves to identify areas that require further improvement and therefore informs the future programme of change, and provides a good measure of the wider impacts of change across the organisation. To reflect this, the internal audit plan for 2019-20 has been divided into audits that will be undertaken an annual cycle (mostly legal requirements), audits that will be used to examine areas of organisational risk, and also now areas the Service will audit as a means for evaluating its organisational improvements.</p> <p>The proposed 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan is commended for approval.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	The internal audit plan will be delivered within existing resources.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ASSESSMENT (ERBA)	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing human rights and equalities legislation.
APPENDICES	A. 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	A. Audit & Review Service Policy B. Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)

2019-20 Audit Plan

	Days
Audit & Review days	200
Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) days - Risk Based Audit	32
Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) days - Key Financial Systems	32
Information Assurance	158
IT Security days	105
Operational Assurance	330
Organisational Safety & Assurance	330
Total Assurance Days	1123
Strategic Reviews	
Annual Statement of Assurance	5
Outcome from HMICFRS	40
Total	5
Compliance Reviews	
Key Financial Systems (DAP)	32
Data Protection Compliance monitoring	158
Total	190
Audit Health Checks	
IT Health Check - Corporate	15
IT Health Check - NFSP	25
RMADS	10
Code of Connection (Airwave/ESN)	15
ISO 27001 Alignment	45
Total	110
Internal Audit	
Evaluation Audits	96
Annual Audits	62
Risk Based Audit (inc. Contingency)	106
Total	264

Agenda Item 9

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	APRC/19/6
MEETING	AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 MAY 2019
SUBJECT OF REPORT	2018-19 DRAFT ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE
LEAD OFFICER	ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER – SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>that, subject to incorporation of any amendments that may be agreed at the meeting, the Authority draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2018-19, prepared to satisfy the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations and the Fire & Rescue Service National Framework and as appended to this report, be approved in principle;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>that the Statement be submitted as part of the audit process for the 2018-19 Statement of Accounts and a further report submitted to the July 2019 meeting seeking approval to the final Statement, subject to incorporation of any issues identified during the audit process.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Attached for consideration is the 2018-19 Draft Annual Statement of Assurance.</p> <p>Accounting Requirements</p> <p>The <i>Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015</i> requires authorities to prepare an annual governance statement in support of its statement of accounts. This governance statement is an expression of the measures taken by the authority to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance.</p> <p>Fire and Rescue National Framework Requirements</p> <p>The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England sets out the requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish annual Statements of Assurance. It provides:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“The statement should outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document – to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan (e.g. the Fire and Rescue Plan) prepared by the authority for that period. The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters. One of the principal aims of the Statement of Assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority’s performance.”</p>

	<p>One of the principal aims of the Statement of Assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.</p> <p>The Statement of Assurance will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.</p> <p>The Statement of Assurance should be signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents.</p> <p>Statements of assurance should be published annually by fire and rescue authorities. It is for fire and rescue authorities to decide when they should publish depending on individual reporting arrangements.</p> <p>Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Approach</p> <p>The Authority has agreed that the most appropriate way to manage both the National Framework and regulatory requirements is through the creation of one assurance report entitled 'Annual Statement of Assurance'.</p> <p>Alongside the Statement of Accounts for the year in question, the Annual Statement of Assurance is submitted in draft form for verification by the Authority's external auditors. The Annual Statement of Assurance is then submitted for approval by the Audit & Performance Review Committee prior to signature by the Committee's Chair and the Chief Fire Officer. The final Annual Assurance Statement is then published alongside the approved Statement of Accounts for the financial year in question on the Authority's website.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Nil.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ASSESSMENT (ERBA)	Not applicable.
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>2018-19 Draft Statement of Accounts</p> <p>Fire and Rescue National Framework for England</p> <p>CLG – Guidance on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England</p> <p>CFOA – Proposed Template for Annual Statement of Assurance</p> <p>CIPFA – Delivering good governance in Local Government</p> <p>CIPFA – The role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government</p> <p>CIPFA – The role of the Head of Internal Audit in public service organisations</p> <p>CLG – Local Government Transparency Code 2015</p>



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority

2018-19 Annual Statement of
Assurance

Audit & Review Manager

Devon and Somerset
Fire & Rescue Authority

29/03/2019

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1. Introduction

The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (“the Authority”) recognises that good governance leads to effective management, sustained performance, accountability of public money, continued public engagement and helps to deliver outcomes for citizens. Through good governance the Service can deliver its vision as well as ensuring there are effective mechanisms for control and the management of risk.

The Annual Statement of Assurance details the approach for how the Authority has developed and applied its governance framework in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 Requirements

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted. The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The *Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015* require authorities to prepare an annual governance statement in support of their Statement of Accounts. The governance statement is an expression of the measures taken by the authority to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England Requirements

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (May, 2018) sets out the requirement for fire and rescue authorities to publish an annual Statement of Assurance.

This states:

“Every fire and rescue authority must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. Every authority must publish an annual statement of assurance of compliance with the Framework” (Section 1.4)

“The statement should outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document – to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan (e.g. the Fire and Rescue Plan – see 4.10 below) prepared by the authority for that period. The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters. For PCC FRAs, this statement is subject to scrutiny by the Police, Fire and Crime Panel. The name of this statement differs across governance models (e.g. in the case of PCC FRAs it is called the ‘Fire and Rescue Statement’ and in Greater Manchester the ‘Fire and Rescue Declaration’).” (Section 4.6.ii)

One of the principal aims of the Statement of Assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority’s performance.

The Statement of Assurance will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the *Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004*.

The Statement of Assurance should be signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents.

Statements of assurance should be published annually by fire and rescue authorities. It is for fire and rescue authorities to decide when they should publish depending on individual reporting arrangements.

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Approach

The Authority has agreed that the most appropriate way to manage both the National Framework and regulatory requirements is through the creation of one assurance report entitled 'Annual Statement of Assurance'.

The Annual Statement of Assurance is submitted as a draft version alongside the Statement of Accounts for the year in question, for verification by the Authority's external auditors. The Annual Statement of Assurance is then submitted for approval by the Audit & Performance Review Committee prior to signature by the Committee's Chair and the Chief Fire Officer. The final Annual Assurance Statement is then published alongside the approved Statement of Accounts for the financial year in question on the Authority's website.

2. Delivery of Functions

Statutory Responsibility

Fire and rescue authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework, the key aspects of which are:

- the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- the Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- the Localism Act 2011
- the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

Corporate Planning

The Service has three key documents that combined sets out our strategic direction for the next 4 years; the integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), The Fire and Rescue Plan (F&RP), and the Safer Together Programme.

The Integrated Risk Management Plan is the means by which the Service assesses and analyses the risks faced by the communities we serve. The Plan gives a clear mandate to address those risks through the Prevention, Protection and Response activities of the Service.

The Fire and Rescue Plan contains the Service's Vision, Purpose, Values and Priorities. It describes the challenges we face as an organisation, for example, the financial challenge and how we propose to address those challenges setting out our strategic intent for the key areas of the organisation.

Safer Together, our change and improvement programme, is derived from the IRMP and the F&RP. The programme contains the prioritised work streams for the next 3-4 years that as a Service we must deliver if we are to achieve real improvements in the Service we provide to our communities whilst making the financial savings required.

Having the three distinct documents will facilitate greater transparency and clarity, to better achieve Service priorities and the implementation of change and improvement.

They are underpinned by Annual Directorate Statements which clearly reflect the priorities set by the Fire Authority (the F&RP and IRMP) and a series of Group and Service plans which set out our work for the financial year. The achievement of the objectives in the Fire and Rescue Plan, IRMP and the Safer Together Programme will be monitored by the Executive Board. The Directorate, Group and Service plans will be monitored at least quarterly by the respective management teams.

In order to embed the Service's approach to managing strategic and operational risks, risk management has been integrated within the planning process so that it is part of direction setting, activity and resource planning and activity monitoring. The process includes the identification, assessment and recording of risks and mitigating activities which will be incorporated into Directorate and Service plans.

Programme and Project risks will be subject to the governance arrangements established for our Safer Together Programme, including a Business Design Authority.

The Service's planning framework requires all the plans to be reviewed, updated and refocused where required annually.

Fleet, Equipment and Water Supplies

In 2018-19 the Service agreed a Fleet, Equipment and Water supply strategy setting out the organisational responsibilities to ensure a safe, fit for purpose fleet, for what is the largest fleet capability of a fire and rescue service outside London. The strategy sets out our intention for supporting a new service delivery model, modernising our fleet management operations and collaboration and innovation to reflect an increasingly diverse workforce and the environmental aims of our communities. The Service has a 15 year replacement programme with the budget approved by the Authority for fleet which details vehicles and year of replacement. The Service follows the NFCC (CFOA) Best Practice Manual for the maintenance of Fire Service Vehicles.

Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act the Service has a duty to secure Water. Adopting the National Guidance Document for provision of Water for fire-fighting purposes (2017) the Service operates a risk based approach for the 57,000 hydrants management and maintenance requirements. Priorities in 2019/20 are to progress the fleet capital replacement programme, review of requirements for all fleet types and to implement new asset management systems and processes.

Operational Debriefs

An operational debrief strategy and policy is in place, and currently subject to review to ensure consistency with new national guidance. Debriefs provide the opportunity for operational personnel to identify good practice and any lessons learned for further improving the delivery of service.

Process for Operational Assurance

Our Fire & Rescue Plan 2018-2022 contains a commitment to improve staff safety and consists of a number of key components:

- Considering new technologies and equipment in our service design to support staff safety, provide better firefighting tactics, and increase inclusive and efficient ways of working.
- Ensuring our staff are appropriately supported and well trained, providing risk-based training and development that is centred around safety-critical elements.
- Making sure our firefighters remain fit and take a more holistic approach to health, safety and wellbeing across the whole organisation.

To ensure the right focus in the right areas, an Organisational Safety Assurance Team has been embedded into the organisational structure.

This team monitors and reports on a variety of activities linked to operational response. Key activities such as incident and exercise monitoring, station assessments and station visits form part of this framework. Working closely with the Organisation's policy and performance groups, and our Training Academy, the team works to ensure that the Organisation has a clear line of sight on trends and performance to address any identified areas of concern.

Following every incident a "hot debrief" should take place to review what happened and why, and to discuss areas that went particularly well and areas that didn't. A new process has been introduced to allow Operational crews to submit learning points from these debriefs.

National Learning

In accordance with the Authority's commitment to Public and Staff Safety, the Operational Assurance Team ensures that the learning outcomes from tragic national events are fed back into the Service. The learning comes from other Fire & Rescue Services directly affected, via the National Operational Learning (NOL) portal, The Coroners Regulations 28/29 reports (formerly known as 'Rule 43' reports) and recommendations to all Fire & Rescue Services by the Health and Safety Executive. A process has been implemented to enable efficient management of learning and outcomes.

The Operational Assurance Team works with the Service to digest the information, review the Service's ways of working, feed in improvements from the lessons learned, raise awareness across Service personnel and provide any additional training events.

Collaborative and Partnership Working and National Roles

DSFRS is committed to forming or joining partnerships that assist it achieving its organisational goals and contribute to our purpose "we are here to Protect and Save".

The Service continues to strengthen its partnership working with other fire and rescue services, bluelight services, local authorities, community groups and other organisations by working to common objectives at the local, regional and national level. The improvement of prevention and protection work is a major priority and the Service also contributes to wider community objectives identified in Local Area Agreements where appropriate.

Throughout the last year, collaborative work has continued to grow through the South West Emergency Services Collaboration (SWESC). This is a formal collaborative partnership with a governance structure that is chaired by the chair of our Fire Authority and involves SWAST, Devon and Cornwall Police, Avon and Somerset Police, Dorset Police, Wiltshire Police, Gloucestershire Police, Cornwall FRS, Avon FRS, Dorset and Wiltshire FRS, Gloucestershire FRS, HM Coastguard and the RNLI. A number of collaborative arrangements have been put in place, this includes estates sharing, joint operational officers, support for the ambulance service in gaining entry to properties where people have collapsed behind locked doors and search operations for high risk missing persons.

Following the introduction of the Policing and Crime act (2017), CFO Lee Howell took on a new challenge, leading the Office for Data Analytics (formerly known as Multi Agency Integrated Services Hub). This is a small team who have the resources, technology and expertise, to use business intelligence and predictive analytics, to improve collaboration between the emergency services in the south-west, to improve service delivery and reduce costs.

The Authority is a key participant in multi-agency liaison arrangements, joint exercises and the sharing of resources which contribute to an enhanced, effective and efficient incident response.

The Authority has worked in partnership with other fire and rescue authorities to secure "transformational" funding to enable:

- Establishment of an NFCC national procurement hub (now the Project Management Office for the Fire Commercial Transformation Programme), with the National Project Lead being hosted by the Service.

- Establishment of a web cloud for on call firefighter recruitment.

Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC), the mutual protection provider set up and run by eleven Fire and Rescue Authorities, has completed its third year of operations culminating in surplus being achieved every year since it was formed, with a current total of £833k. This is a significant result for FRIC and shows what can be achieved when fire authorities collaborate in an innovative and mutually beneficial manner. Surplus generated would otherwise have gone out of the public sector, instead it can be retained to support further improvements and drive better risk management and ultimately, deliver lower costs for FRIC's members.

The continued success is due primarily to lower than expected claims experience, which is set at the lower range of scenarios predicted. Another contributing factor has been a drive to improve motor claims reporting times, enabling third party capture for "at fault claims". Evidence shows that third party costs can be as much as two thirds lower if contact is made with third party claimants quickly and claims handled by the Mutual rather than third party insurers.

Networked Fire Services Partnership

The Networked Fire Services Partnership (NFSP) is a significant collaboration between three fire services (Hampshire, Devon & Somerset and Dorset & Wiltshire) initially set up to deliver a networked fire control solution which was achieved in April 2016. An Information Governance Partnership Group meets regularly to review the required governance procedures that are required under legislation and monitor current and emerging risks to the information the system holds. A risk remediation plan is in place to ensure security risks are managed effectively and there is an annual IT health check for assurance. This supports the Authority's compliance with the Airwave Code of Connection, and the upcoming Emergency Services Network (ESN) which is due to replace the Airwave service.

Subsequently the NFSP has committed to scoping further collaboration opportunities that will support all 3 Services in achieving increased effectiveness and efficiency as well as sharing and developing good practice with regards to staff issues.

Co-Responding

The Authority has a formal partnership agreement in place with the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust to provide a co-responder medical response (an initial medical provision to stabilise casualties in life-threatening emergencies prior to the arrival of the ambulance service).

3. National Resilience

The Emergency Planning Team is responsible for ensuring that the Service meets the Authority's obligations as laid out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire Services Act.

Effective arrangements are in place to collaborate with partners through Local Resilience Forums, the National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers network, the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme, the Critical National Infrastructure and Safety Advisory Groups which support multi-agency planning activity.

Previously the Service had created a specialist team of volunteers to respond to Marauding Terrorist Attacks (MTA). The Service, following changes in the National Planning Assumptions, has supplemented this capability with a further 16 specialist responders based at Plympton funded via a Home Office Grant.

The MTA capability has been established within The Authority to support our partner agencies, of Police and Ambulance, in response to an MTA incident within The Authority area or, under National Mutual Aid, to any other location within the UK as requested. The overall aim is to save life, and the two main strands of FRS support during this type of incident are for casualty care, and fire hazards management.

The capability is made up of two key groups;

1. National Interagency Liaison Officers (known as NILOs)
2. Specialist Response Team (SRT) Operatives

Both of the above groups undergo specialist training for responding to the MTA threat, but fulfil different specific functions within a response.

Specialist Operations

The Specialist Operations programme was set up after the events of 11 September 2001, which prompted the Government to review and improve the UK's capacity to respond to the increased threats arising from a 'new dimension' of emergency. Such threats include major incidents involving chemical, biological or radioactive materials, which would require a mass decontamination of large numbers of people, or rescue from collapsed structures.

The programme is also a response to increased risks from non-terrorist emergencies, such as major flooding resulting from changing climate patterns. In the UK we have faced the challenge of large scale flooding, the fuel crisis and a major epidemic of Foot and Mouth Disease. We need to be able to cope with and recover from a range of unexpected disruptive events, for example building collapse, or natural disasters.

The programme is split into six sections, all directly linked to each other:

- Mass Decontamination
- Urban Search and Rescue
- Water Capability
- Long Term Management
- Command & Control
- Logistics

The Service has mobilising procedures and policies in place to be able to respond to incidents anywhere in the Country, and work closely with other emergency services and organisations to provide an integrated service.

Different levels of response apply depending on the severity and location of the incident. These levels have been set nationally by The Home Office.

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow mutual assistance arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring Services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. The Authority has in place contractual agreements with our neighbouring fire and rescue authorities for response to incidents requiring their support.

In addition to sections 13 and 16 there is a partnership agreement between the Authority and Dorset & Wiltshire and Hampshire fire and rescue authorities to provide a common, networked mobilising system with the principle of ensuring that the response mobilised to an incident is always the nearest and most appropriate resource/s based upon travel time and attributes (i.e. having the necessary skills or equipment) to deal with the incident.

Business Continuity and Resilience

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) has a Strategic Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and a number of Tactical plans in place to ensure that it is prepared for a range of new threats and challenges. Business Continuity Management (BCM) processes are also undertaken so that the organisation can continue the delivery of services following a disruptive incident.

A business continuity exercise for senior management took place in July 2018, and a corporate business continuity exercise was held in March 2019. An outcome of this was to appoint a full time Business Continuity Manager in December 2018 who is responsible for providing specialist advice and guidance on BCM issues, including the co-ordination, development, implementation and review of BC plans, processes and procedures. The Business Continuity Manager also has the responsibility of meeting with identified Directorate representatives regarding the review of Business Impact Analysis and plans as required.

DSFRS undertakes training and exercising in compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

At least one corporate Business Continuity exercise will be held annually following which a formal report will be distributed highlighting 'what went well' and potential areas for improvement.

The service embraces the principles of 'Plan, Do, Check, and Act' and aligns with some aspects of the ISO: 22301 (Societal Security – Business Continuity management systems and requirements).

A Contingency Response Team is responsible for the delivery of continuity in all Business Continuity incidents, in addition to an Operational Support Team which can be activated as required.

4. Governance

The Purpose of Corporate Governance

Corporate Governance comprises:

- the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled; and
- those activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community.

Corporate Governance enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant and integral part of the governance arrangements designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. While it cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives, it should nonetheless provide a reasonable level of assurance of organisational effectiveness in this area.

This statement refers to the governance arrangements that have been in place for the Authority up to the year ended 31 March 2019 and up to the date of consideration of the statement of accounts.

Code of Corporate Governance

The Authority has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/ Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". A copy of the Code is on the Authority's website at [DSFIRE website](#) can be obtained from the Clerk to the Authority. This Statement explains how the Authority has complied with the Code.

Review of Effectiveness

The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness is informed by the work of senior managers within the Service who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The 2018-19 review has identified 25 key elements to the Authority's governance arrangements:

1. The Authority was constituted under the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (Combination Scheme) Order 2006. The Authority has strategic responsibility for discharging fire and rescue authority functions for the combined area with the day-to-day responsibility resting with the Chief Fire Officer and other officers within the Executive Board.
2. For the majority of the 2018-19 financial year, the Authority comprised 26 Members appointed by the constituent authorities (Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council). In addition, there is an “independent person” appointed in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
3. During the 2018-19 financial year, the Authority operated with the following permanent committees:
 - Resources Committee (7 Members)
 - Human Resources Management & Development Committee (7 Members);
 - Audit & Performance Review Committee (7 Members);
 - Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee (7 Members);
 - Chief Fire Officers’ Appraisal Panel (4 Members);
 - Standards Committee (7 Members plus consultation as required with an Independent person).

Terms of reference for each of these committees were approved by the Authority. The committee structure (including terms of reference) are subject to annual review but may also be amended in-year as circumstances dictate.

4. The Audit & Performance Review Committee operates in accordance with the CIPFA best practice guidance on audit committees. It provides an additional level of review and scrutiny of the organisation’s internal and external audit arrangements (including consideration and monitoring of any reports and associated action plans), corporate governance and risk arrangements, and financial statements (Annual Statement of Accounts). The Committee has responsibility for the operation of the Authority’s strategy for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption and monitors the Service’s performance.
5. The constitutional governance arrangements are contained in the following documents:
 - Members Roles and Responsibilities
 - Standing orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Treasury Management Policy
 - Contract Standing Orders
 - Scheme of Delegations
 - Members Code of Conduct
 - Protocol for Member / Officer Relations

- Policy on Gifts and Hospitality
- Scheme of Members Allowances
- Corporate Governance Code
- “Whistleblowing” Code (Confidential Reporting Policy)
- Strategy on the prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption
- Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

These documents, with the exception of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity (which is a national document issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986), are subject to review at least annually and are updated as and when necessary to reflect legislative change, organisational change or best practice, as relevant, to ensure they remain up-to-date and fit for purpose.

6. The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that effective financial stewardship is in place across the Service in conducting the business of the Authority. The Authority’s financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.
7. The statutory functions of the Proper Financial and Monitoring Officers provide a source of assurance that the Authority’s systems of governance and internal control are effective and being complied with.
8. The 2018-19 Internal Audit Plan was approved by the Audit & Performance Review Committee on the 26 April 2018. The plan sets out the combined scope of internal audit work to be completed by the Audit & Review manager, the Information Assurance team, and Devon Audit Partnership. A total of 345 internal audit days were utilised to provide assurance to the Authority relating to the management of risks and associated operational activities. The Audit & Review manager, the Information Assurance team and the Devon Audit Partnership are accountable for the delivery of the plan and the policy includes the requirement to report progress to the Audit & Performance Review Committee at least three times per year. This happened 27th July 2018, 9th November 2018, and 18th January 2019. The Authority’s shared service internal audit arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in public service organisations.
9. Service risk registers are populated and reviewed periodically. This process in turn informs the Corporate Risk Register. In order to embed the Service’s approach to managing strategic and operational risks, risk management is being integrated within the planning process so that it is part of direction setting, activity and resource planning and activity monitoring. The process includes the identification, assessment and recording of risks and mitigating activities which will be incorporated into Directorate and Service plans.
10. The operation of the Authority's Corporate Risk Register is reviewed by Service management on a quarterly basis to ensure that risks to the Authority’s strategic objectives and corporate plans are appropriately identified and managed. The Corporate Risk Register is presented to the Audit & Performance Review committee every six months.

11. The Authority maintains comprehensive insurance cover to support its management of organisational risk.
12. The 2018-19 External Audit provision was provided by Grant Thornton. The scope of the External Audit work includes the Accounting Statements and Whole of Government Accounts and a Value for Money Statement. No significant issues have arisen to date from the External Audit work completed in 2018-19.
13. The Authority participates in the biennial National Fraud Initiative scheme. A new data matching exercise has been completed in 2018-19, and the results will be reviewed throughout 2019-20.
14. The Service has a Strategic Health & Safety Committee which meets quarterly to monitor health, safety and welfare of employees as per section 2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. All representative bodies (trades unions) recognised by the Authority, i.e. the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), the Fire and Rescue Services Association (FRSA), the Fire Officers Association (FOA) and UNISON, are invited to sit on this Committee.
15. In 2018-19 the Health & Safety team trialled a new, specific Fire & Rescue service Safety Management System audit process, designed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, with a review completed by Devon Audit Partnership. The results of this will be examined and will help determine the approach to be used in future years.
16. The Operational Assurance Team is now embedded in the organisational structure and culture. As part of the 'Safe Person Concept' the team monitors and reports on a variety of activities linked to Operational Response.
17. The Organisational Safety Manager attends the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) H&S meetings & chairs the regional NFCC H&S meetings.
18. A governance framework has been prepared for programme and project management, which defines roles and responsibilities, and outlines the methodology which will be applied, as the organisation embarks on the transformational change programme, "Safer Together".
19. Delivery of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Compliance Plan has resulted in the establishment of a Personal Information Management System for the Service. This is supported by a legally required Record of Processing Activity (ROPA) which provides Service-wide visibility of the personal data that is processed and why. Activities have been risk assessed to prioritise future assurance work. A compliance gap analysis has been completed and whilst this has identified that the majority of milestones are well established, there is future work planned to further embed this within the organisation. A compliance monitoring framework has been established which is informing the Information Assurance (IA) Plan and an internal audit by the Devon audit Partnership of GDPR compliance has been commissioned which will also inform the plan.
20. Contract Standing Orders (approved by the Authority at its Annual Meeting) are, along with the Authority's other constitutional framework documents, subject to annual review and in-year changes as and when required. Guidance materials on procurement and contract management are available on the Authority website and Service intranet for the Service staff. Priorities for 2018-19 have been to support the NFCC (fire) Commercial Transformation Programme (FCTP) and collaboration opportunities as well as deliver service priorities and savings.

21. The Procurement Team manage contracts above £20,000 to ensure compliance with EU and UK legislation and best practice; to ensure that the Authority can demonstrate value for money and deliver savings and efficiencies. The procurement team is actively engaged in wider collaborative National Procurement initiatives. The Service's Head of Fleet and Procurement is the NFCC Commercial Category lead for Fleet as part of the NFCC FCTP, who sits on the Local Government Association National Advisory Group for Procurement (representing Fire and Rescue Service nationally) and is part of the South West Procurement Board, which involves first tier and district councils from the region. The Corporate Procurement Manager is also the NFCC National Procurement Lead as part of the NFCC FCTP.

Within 2018-19 the Procurement team have been responsible for contract management of the NFCC's Emergency Response Vehicles framework, and the NFCC's Respiratory Protective Equipment framework on behalf of the fire sector and led on collaborative arrangements for Road traffic collision equipment (RTC), Employee Payroll, Firefighter pensions, and Pensioners payroll contracts have also been implemented, on a collaborative basis with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service.

22. Red One Ltd has been established to allow the Authority to deliver commercial activities within the legislative framework that applies. The Authority has taken legal advice to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and to ensure effective governance arrangements, which have been enhanced following appointment of independent board members
23. Corporate commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion are set out in the Fire & Rescue Plan, and in our People Strategy. These set out the changes needed to support the new Integrated Risk Management Plan and HMICFRS inspection. The Fire & Rescue Plan and People Strategy address issues relevant to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace at each stage of the employee lifecycle, including attraction, recruitment, retention, development and progression. These also state how the service will meet the needs of different communities and vulnerable people in order to reduce risk. The HRMD committee monitors progress on the linked Diversity & Inclusion plan every three months.
24. The Service has a process in place to ensure that potential equality impacts are identified and mitigated when preparing or reviewing policies. The process is called Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis and it helps us to deliver better services and working practices as well as ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The process was updated in 2018-19 to reflect the latest legal developments. Implementation of a People Impact Assessment has broadened the scope to include wider impacts on people including data protection, health & safety and safeguarding. Mandatory equalities training was rolled out across the service in 2018-19 including a new "understanding unconscious bias" e-learning package.
25. Our Values were revised during a series of workshops with employees in 2017. These set out what the Service stands for and what matters most to employees and the Organisation. These are:
- We are proud to help
 - We are honest
 - We are respectful

- We are working together

A cultural audit took place in 2018-19 which aimed to establish how well understood and accepted our values are across DSFRS, as well as providing an objective review of our decision making process, levels of staff empowerment, and to help inform our new Fairness/Dignity at Work policy. The results of this audit will also be used to help inform review and development of other policy and processes in 2019-20 and assist in monitoring staff satisfaction levels.

The 2018-19 review by the Authority has concluded that there are good systems, procedures and checks in place to manage the Authority's governance arrangements.

5. Financial Assurance

Statement of Accounts

It is a statutory requirement under the *Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015* for authorities to publish the financial results of their activities for the year. The 'Statement of Accounts', shows the annual costs of providing the service and is determined by a Code of Practice published by CIPFA, which aims to give a "true and fair" view of the financial position and transactions of the authority.

The Treasurer is responsible for the approval of the Statement of Accounts prior to publication. To meet the requirements of the Regulations, the draft Statement of Accounts is published by the end of May with the final audited Statement of Accounts published by the end of July.

External Audit Arrangements

On an annual basis, the Statement of Accounts is subject to external audit scrutiny. Following a national procurement exercise (conducted by the Audit Commission), Grant Thornton was appointed as the external auditors for the South West region.

Grant Thornton is therefore responsible for the completion of the following assurance activities:

- Audit of the 2018-19 financial statements
- Proposed opinion on the Authority's accounts
- Proposed Value for Money conclusion

Internal Audit Arrangements

To support the External Audit process, the Authority has in place a robust system for Internal Auditing. The Audit & Review Manager worked with Senior Managers and Authority Members to develop an annual Internal Audit Plan that is delivered across the Service. The plan includes a contract with the Devon Audit Partnership to deliver specialised key financial audits, and detailed review of potential risk areas identified.

A full competitive procurement process was undertaken in 2018-19 to ensure that the appointed internal audit providers delivered appropriate value and quality; this process awarded Devon Audit Partnership with a 3 year contract to continue providing internal audit for the authority.

Performance against the Plan is reported to senior managers and Members on a quarterly basis, with a year-end report produced in April/May time. The Internal Audit Plan was successfully delivered in 2018-19.

The 2018-19 year end Internal Audit report concluded that the systems in operation within the Service demonstrated a good level of internal control.

Agreed management actions are monitored through the Service's Assurance tracking process alongside the outcomes of External Audits, Internal Audits, External reviews, security events, and safety events.

Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”)

The Regulations set out the EU legal framework for contracting public authorities to follow in securing a contract for works, supplies and services where the contract value exceeds set thresholds (unless the contract qualifies for a specific exclusion as defined in the Regulations applies). The Regulations are not static but subject to change, driven by evolving European and domestic case law and UK Regulations. The EU rules reflect and reinforce the value for money focus of the Government's procurement policy. The EU procurement regime is based on the Treaty principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment and proportionality. Even where the procurement process is not subject to the Regulations the EU Treaty based principles apply.

The Head of Fleet and Procurement and Corporate Procurement Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Service processes conform to the Regulations and Treaty principles.

Data Transparency

The Service complies with the Government's 'Local Government Transparency Code 2015' for releasing public data. The following arrangements are in place:

- A Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- Publication of the annual statement of accounts
- Publication of all expenditure over £500
- Publication of all Government Procurement Card transactions
- Publication of Procurement Information
- Publication of land ownership
- Publication of Trade Union facility time
- Publication of a Pay Policy Statement including all senior employee salaries and the pay multiple
- Publication of fraud investigations
- Publication of Members' allowances and expenses

- Publication of External Audit reports
- Publication of all committee reports (other than those where a statutory exemption for publication applies).

Financial Planning

In order to secure a fixed level of central government grant funding for the 2016-20 financial years, the Service was required to submit an Efficiency Plan. The Efficiency Plan sets out how the Authority plans to improve the service it provides whilst managing with reduced real-terms funding levels. The Efficiency Plan outlines the key projects which will improve our efficiency alongside the underpinning medium term financial plan, reserves capital and commercial strategies and our Corporate Plan and is available here: [Efficiency Plan](#).

The Efficiency Plan was submitted to the Home Office in October 2016 and approved by the Fire Minister in December 2016. As a result the Service has secured a four year settlement offer which will offer greater certainty over future funding levels.

6. Workforce

Training and Development - Academy

DSFRS, through its Academy, has enabled the delivery of quality assured training to its staff to improve safety and overall effectiveness, which is underwritten by the ISO 9001 (2015) Quality Management Framework.

Over the past 12 months significant changes have been implemented to how training is structured and delivered. We have moved away from a 'school' structure, and the instructors are now able to deliver training more locally. In addition to this, 35 Associate instructors have been recruited from existing station based personnel. These employees will receive further development to enable them to assist with delivery of local training.

This will enable our firefighting workforce to get the most out of their drill nights and training events, by participating in location based training and assessments, on the subjects that are most required by them.

The new functional leads within the training department will take responsibility for:

- **Quality assurance** – Reviewing governance arrangements and standards in training, process mapping, permit to teach standards and Quality assurance of our training activities.
- **Training Assets** – Management of estates, equipment and vehicles which are used for training, management of the learning library (which includes e-learning and course development), maintaining the asset register and liaison with other key departments such as the Health & Safety team, the Estates department and the Fleet & Equipment department.
- **Planning & Resourcing** – Planning, scheduling and updating the training and event programme, and includes allocation of required resources, from venues and equipment to trainers and assessors.

- **Customer Service & Administration** – Supporting the management of information assets and general administration functions to support the training teams. This will also involve liaising with external agencies, suppliers and partners. Financial and reporting functions will also be the responsibility of this functional area.
- **Training delivery** – Responsible for the delivery of training events and assessments as required.

DSFRS have invested in new vehicles to assist in the delivery of training, such as the Mobile Safety and Height and Confined Spaces (SHACS) training vehicle.

The Academy have also released a new e-learning system that links with other DSFRS Workbench applications. This utilises a “single-sign in” approach to ensure that it is fully accessible to all users, and uses an intuitive system which will target training towards the users.

DSFRS have also been working with an external provider to develop a training needs assessment algorithm, to ensure that our staff get the right training, at the right time, in the right place.

The service have developed new applications/systems which provides better accessibility and transparency when employees are checking their core competencies (the key training that they require in order to ensure they are completing their job in the most appropriate manner).

Firefighter Fitness

In December 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government approved an Addendum to the National Framework for England in relation to firefighter fitness and the principles that should be applied to help ensure that firefighters maintain the standards of personal fitness required to safely perform their duties and that they are supported in remaining fit and in continued employment.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have a Firefit Steering Committee who provide guidance and recommendations to the UK Fire & Rescue Service on Fitness Standards, Protocols and Policy.

The Service has a Physical Fitness Policy and three dedicated Fitness Advisors in post to support Firefighters to attain and maintain the fitness standards that are required. The Service has also introduced Fitness Advocates who are existing operational staff that provide an additional fitness role to the Service and are qualified to a minimum of a Level 2 Gym Instructor.

There is an opportunity for DSFRS to improve and test information quality regarding this subject, to enable comparison to other Fire & Rescue services.

Commitment to Health & Safety

The Authority recognises and accepts its responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its activities. To achieve this, the Service looks to meet all relevant requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (together with all other statutory provisions associated with it) and support staff in meeting their obligations under the Act.

Detailed health, safety and welfare specific arrangements are set out in Service policies developed to take account of relevant legislation and guidance, including the Health and Safety Executive's HS(G)65 methodology. The policies provide employees with relevant and comprehensive information on the risks they face and the preventative and protective measures required to control them.

A robust system for actively monitoring the effectiveness of the Organisations Health and Safety Management procedures is in place. The process includes the completion of a rolling three year programme of audits of all premises and departments, provision of accident and near miss incident data to the Strategic Safety Committee every two months for review, annual completion of premises Health, Safety and Welfare Assessment Report Forms, and a means to fully audit the organisations Health and Safety management systems on a 2 yearly basis.

In addition to this, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) selected DSFRS as one of six Fire and Rescue Services to be inspected in 2018-19. The combined findings celebrated a number of areas of good practice across the Fire and Rescue Services inspected, as well as identifying some areas where all the services could improve, such as reducing reliance on paperwork. This process enabled identification and sharing of good practice across all participating services.

A comprehensive accident investigation system ensures all safety events are reported and investigated with corrective action completed as required. The system provides for detailed analysis of safety events to identify trends which further enhances a proactive health and safety management system.

Establishing a Charity



The charity SAFE South West continues to operate successfully as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, working closely with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, local communities and other emergency services. SAFE South West develops new and innovative community safety initiatives across communities in Devon and Somerset, raises funding and provides grants, support and guidance to organisations and projects. Further information on SAFE South West can be found on the Charity's website –

www.safesouthwest.co.uk

7. Inspection, Intervention and Accountability

How we measure and monitor our performance

Significant work has been completed in 2018-19 to ensure that we are able to effectively review our performance in a way that is meaningful and practical. This work includes developing a suite of performance measures, setting performance targets and planning the reporting approaches for these. The below explains each of these in more detail.

Performance Measures

Effective performance management is key to delivering services successfully, it ensures a focus on what matters most and enables improvement. The Service's performance measures help us to know what current performance actually is and what needs to change to get us where we want to be.

DSFRS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) represent the Service as a whole and are aligned to strategic priorities and focus on driving improvements. They form the basis of regular performance monitoring reports to the Fire Authority, Executive Board (EB) and the Extended Leadership Team (ELT).

It is essential that the DSFRS KPIs are accounted for within the service planning process, clearly identifying the services responsible for the achievement of the targets set against the relevant DSFRS KPIs. In some cases we have additional Directorate, programme or service level indicators that are developed as part of the service planning process to monitor operational progress.

All performance indicators are reviewed annually to ensure they are still relevant.

Performance Targets

Targets will be set at all levels of the organisation, from the strategic DSFRS KPIs to the targets set for individuals within appraisals. Progress has been made on the development of a new appraisal system. Targets for the DSFRS KPIs will be discussed within the Service to review the resource implications and then be agreed by the EB and the Audit Performance and Review Committee (APRC) before being widely communicated.

In addition by the beginning of the financial year managers will also set forward targets for all other local PI's within their service. When setting targets managers will set them for improvement and where possible base them on trend or benchmarking information.

All targets will be reviewed at least annually and restated to reflect progress or deterioration.

Reporting Performance

Regular reporting against our plans and performance measures help to ensure a sustained focus on those things that matter most, resulting in delivery of our priorities and improvement agenda.

6 monthly / Quarterly

Reports of the key measures will be produced in a simple format using line / trend charts and graphs and will include interpretation, analysis and any

actions to be taken. The audience for these reports are the Fire Authority, APRC, Executive Board/Extended Leadership Team and Group Commands.

Reports focus on exceptions, i.e. those measures that are exceeding target and those not on target. This encourages celebration of success and sharing of good practice along with discussion on actions needed to rectify poor performance.

Live

Reporting using dashboards of a small number of measures primarily for Service Delivery Management, Group Commands and Stations.

Audit & Review

The delivery of the annual Internal Audit Plan provides independent assurance to senior managers and Authority Members on the effectiveness of the risk management, internal control and governance arrangements in delivering organisational objectives.

The scope of audit work includes the review of operational activities including Response, Resilience, Protection, Prevention, Fire Control and all supporting departments.

HMICFRS

In summer 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) took on inspections of England's fire & rescue services, assessing and reporting on their efficiency, effectiveness and leadership, and changed their name to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reflect this change.

A national inspection programme was designed and in order to prepare for this, the 45 Fire & Rescue services in England were asked to provide the inspectorate with information and evidence to support their upcoming assessments.

At DSFRS an Inspection Readiness team was established, to work closely with HMICFRS, and to ensure that they have everything they need to conduct a fair assessment. Throughout 2018-19 this team have liaised regularly with HMICFRS, and have supported other departments in the gathering of evidence. DSFRS's self-assessment has been submitted to HMICFRS. The inspection is due to be completed in June 2019, and the outcome will be made publicly available towards the end of 2019.

8. Future Challenges

The following future changes or challenges have been identified that may impact the Authority in the next 12 months:

- Aligning resources to risk and prioritising prevention and protection activity.
- The existing shift patterns and some work routines are not always meeting our needs and the changing risks within our communities.
- By 2022, we will need to reduce our costs by at least £8.4 million and we need to plan a balanced budget that accommodates this.

- Making sure our workforce are clear on the organisation's future direction.
- Further developing contracts and career paths to support inclusivity ensuring that the service has a workforce that reflects communities served.
- Sharing information in a secure and meaningful way, considering cyber security and data protection risks.

9. Significant Governance, Operational or Financial Control Issues

Continuing appraisal of the governance and internal control mechanisms during the accounting period has identified the following internal control issues which the organisation will address in the next year via Action Plans:

- a. Performance measures: Reporting against the full suite of our agreed performance measures. Our Strategic Analyst team and our ICT department are working closely on developing solutions to this.
- b. ICT systems continuity : Failure of ICT systems is a risk which would impact on Business continuity, and our ability to access key records. Our Business Continuity Manager is reviewing system restoration plans with our ICT department and developing a regular Business Continuity exercise programme.
- c. Targeted negative media: This presents reputational risk and impacts ability to provide public reassurance. An out-of-hours communication rota has been established, and Head of Communication attends strategic meetings to support emerging issues.

10. Conclusion

The Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority is satisfied that the issues identified in Section 6 above are appropriate and that steps are already in place to address the improvement areas identified in this review. The Audit & Performance Review Committee will regularly monitor the implementation and operation of these improvement activities as part of its quarterly meetings.

Additionally, the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority is satisfied that the systems and processes that are in place across the organisation fulfil the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

To be confirmed

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**CHAIRMAN, AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE
REVIEW COMMITTEE**

APPENDIX A TO REPORT APRC/18/12 – ACTION PLAN

Identified Issue	Action Needed	Direction of Travel since 2017-18	Lead Officer	Target Date
Integrated Service Asset Register (Fleet and Operational Equipment)	An integrated fleet and operational service asset register needs to be developed and embedded to ensure all assets are effectively recorded and managed to provide consistent data to inform replacement plans and ensure operational assets are fit for purpose.	↑	Head of Fleet & Procurement	Part of the safer Together Change and Improvement Programme. Key milestones and project plan in development.
Performance Management	The performance management framework that is currently under development needs to be finalised and rolled out.	↑	Head of Organisational Assurance	December 2019
Policy Management	A policy management process needs to be developed and embedded.	↑	Director of Finance	April 2020
Collaboration	An appropriate level of governance needs to be applied to Collaborative working initiatives.	↑	Executive Board	September 2019
Clinical Governance	Governance arrangements need to be more clearly defined around the care issued by the DSFRS, to casualties.		Head of Service Delivery : functions	Currently being reviewed
Breathing Apparatus maintenance	The existing disjointed approach to breathing apparatus maintenance is to be investigated.	↑	Head of Procurement and fleet	August 2019
Terrorist/cyber & Data protection	The international increase in cyber attacks presents a growing risk to DSFRS, however, an IT Security Officer is in role, and work is underway to continue aligning our Information Security Practices to the international standard ISO 27001.	↑	Head of Organisational Assurance	December 2019

Identified Issue	Action Needed	Direction of Travel since 2017-18	Lead Officer	Target Date
Delayed or non-attendance of Ambulances	There have been instances of delayed ambulance attendance at scenes, which have been raised with SWAST.	↑	Head of Collaboration	Complete
GDPR	The General Data Protection Regulation came into full force from 25th May 2018. There will be an ongoing challenge to DSFRS to ensure that we maintain compliance, and the Information Assurance team have been working to inform the wider service of their responsibilities under this regulation.	↑	Head of Organisational Assurance	Complete

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REPORT REFERENCE NO.	APRC/19/7
MEETING	AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 MAY 2019
SUBJECT OF REPORT	CORPORATE RISK REGISTER
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Managing risks, both operational and strategic, is an important part of ensuring that the resources of Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service are used to best advantage. Risk is inherent in most things that the Service does and much of its activity is already assessed and managed through the application of the operational risk management procedures and good common sense.</p> <p>The Corporate Risk Register details risks and mitigation to ensure risk is managed appropriately and proportionately.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Nil.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ASSESSMENT (ERBA)	Not applicable.
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>APRC January 2018 – Corporate Risk Register</p> <p>APRC November 2018 – Corporate Risk Register</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aims of Risk Management for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (“the Service”) are to:

- Protect the assets of the Service;
- Ensure service continuity; and
- Facilitate innovation and opportunity.

1.2 Risk management does not mean risk avoidance. It is about encouraging officers and managers to identify, understand and control risk and to learn how to accept the right level of risk.

2. BACKGROUND – CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

2.1 The Service corporate risk register captures and describes the Authority’s most significant risks, with a focus on cross-cutting risks and major projects. It is formally reviewed and refreshed on a regular cycle. In order to embed the Service’s approach to managing strategic and operational risks, risk management is integrated within the planning process so that it is part of direction setting, activity and resource planning and activity monitoring.

2.2 The process includes the identification, assessment and recording of risks and mitigating activities which is incorporated into annual directorate statements and service plans. The final stage of the process, once risks have been reviewed by risk owners and directors, is for the Audit & Performance Review Committee to consider and comment on the register.

2.2 The Service risk profile has changed over the last six months. The Corporate Risk Register contains eight risks with one new risk, CR052 (added March 2019). No risks have increased in severity. As is normal, there have been minor changes to control measures across the risk portfolio. Risk owners are assigned to each issue and active mitigation in place.

2.3 The new risk added:

- CR052 - Industrial action, including withdrawal from voluntary agreements to do non-contractual working, following NJC pay proposal.
- **Mitigation in place:** Business continuity management is a comprehensive cycle of management processes that allows Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) to both understand threats to the delivery of critical activities and to build a capability to ensure the Service can continue to deliver its core objectives during any kind of disruptive event. Business continuity plan adequacy is regularly reviewed, updated and exercised. The Contingency Response Team (CRT) will perform the role of a service continuity team in order to address service-wide emergency and crisis situations. The CRT will be convened when any large scale incident or event threatens to severely disrupt normal DSFRS activities. The primary purpose of the CRT is to act as a focal point for monitoring service wide activities.

3. AMENDED RISKS

5.1 None.

4. RISKS TO BE DELEGATED TO LOCAL RISK REGISTER

6.1 None.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

6. NEXT STEPS

8.1 The next formal review of the corporate risk register will take place July 2019. The register may well therefore need to be refreshed.

ACFO PETE BOND
Director of Service Improvement

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REPORT REFERENCE NO.	APRC/19/8
MEETING	AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 MAY 2019
SUBJECT OF REPORT	DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT: OCTOBR 2018 TO MARCH 2019
LEAD OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Attached for consideration and discussion is the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Performance Report for the reporting period October 2018 to March 2019.</p> <p>The report features the measure details together with information on the measure status – in this report a measure status can be classed as ‘positive performance’, ‘monitor performance’ or ‘negative exception’.</p> <p>The measure statuses are established through assessing performance vs previous year and medium to long-term trends. This method gives a rounded picture of performance and directs focus effectively on emerging issues.</p> <p>Where a measure is reported as an exception, an exception report will be included, providing additional information and analysis relating to the measure and identifying whether further action should be considered at this point.</p> <p>Commentary is included to provide additional contextual information related to the measures within the report and highlights the activities that are being carried out to improve performance.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	None
APPENDICES	A. Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority Performance Report – October1 to March 2019.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Corporate Plan 2013/14 – 2014/15

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DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

October to March 2018/19 Performance Report

Audit and Performance Review Committee

Strategic Analysis Team

Devon & Somerset
Fire & Rescue Service

17/04/2019

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16 to 24	Measures 4-6 Details: Performance against measures relating to fires where people work, visit and in vehicles, exception reports and commentary on associated activities.
25 to 27	Measures 7-8 Details: Performance against measures relating to emergency response standards (ERS) to fires in the home and road traffic collisions (RTCs), exception reports and commentary on associated activities.
28	Sickness Absence Performance: April 2018 to January 2019

Introduction

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) is the largest non-metropolitan fire and rescue service in England. DSFRS provide prevention, protection and response services across the counties of Devon and Somerset (including Torbay and Plymouth).

There are 85 fire stations in the service area, the second largest number in England, and over 1,900 dedicated staff who work to protect the 1.7 million people who live in the area. This alongside the estimated 400,000 people who visit the counties throughout the year.

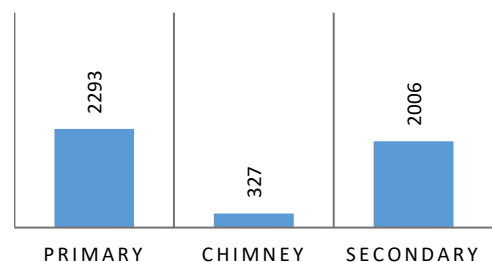
The fire and rescue service does not just rescue people from burning buildings and put out fires. In the 12 month period from April 2018 to March 2019 there were 16,387 incidents attended in the Devon and Somerset service area, a breakdown of the incidents¹ can be seen below:

FIRES, 4626

Primary Fires - generally larger more complex incidents, those with casualties or fatalities or those occurring in dwellings.

Chimney Fires - fires restricted to the confines of the chimney.

Secondary Fires - minor fires, no casualties.

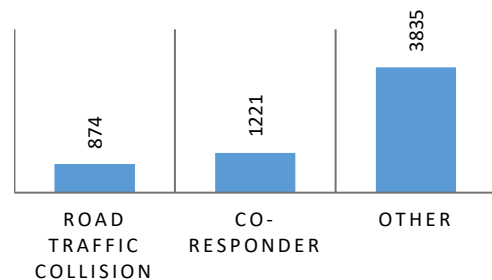


SPECIAL SERVICE, 5930

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended by DSFRS - not fires.

Medical emergencies include Co-responder incidents for which DSFRS provide first response on behalf of the South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST).

Other incidents include flooding, rescue from height, animal rescue

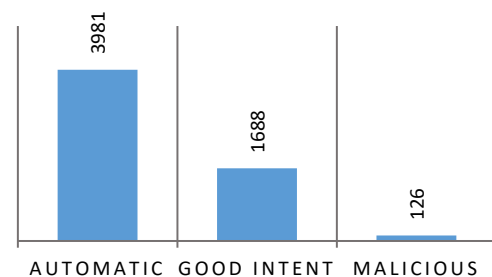


FALSE ALARMS, 5795

Automatic Fire Alarm (AFAs) - calls initiated by fire alarm or fire-fighting equipment operating.

False Alarm Good Intent - calls made in the belief that the Service would attend an emergency incident.

Malicious False Alarm – calls made with the intention of getting the Service to respond to a non-existent incident.



As well as providing a response to emergencies the Service is committed to providing community safety advice, education and intervention to keep its community and its visitors safe and prevent incidents from happening. This can be by ensuring that the responsible person in a business premises is adhering to fire safety legislation, or through community safety activities such as home safety visits, RTC education and youth intervention programmes.

¹ At the point of extraction 36 incidents were incomplete on the Incident Recording System and are therefore not included in the incident breakdown as full details are not available.

Executive Summary

The October to March 2018/19 Performance Report sees five of the eight corporate measures showing positive performance, two showing negative performance and one requiring monitoring.

Positive performance

Fires where people live has seen a 13.8% reduction during quarters three and four of 2018/19 compared to previous year. Rolling three-year trends are all positive, as is the five-year trend for accidental fires although the overall five-year trend is level.

Fire-related deaths where people live have reduced during 2018/19 from five to three, with no deaths in quarters three and four of 2018/19. Three and five-year-trends are all positive.

Fire-related injuries where people work, visit and in vehicles has seen a 50.0% reduction during Q3 and Q4 2018/19 when compared to previous year. While the rolling three-year-trends are negative, this is largely influenced by the low number of injuries and is not considered an area of concern.

Emergency response standards for fires where people live is showing improvement across all comparatives. Q3 and Q4 2018/19 has seen an improvement of 3.4% pt. compared to previous year, with year-to-date and rolling three and five-year-trends all indicating a positive direction of travel.

Emergency response standards for road traffic collisions is showing improvement across all comparatives. Q3 and Q4 2018/19 has seen an improvement of 2.5% pt. compared to previous year, with year-to-date and rolling three and five-year-trends all indicating a positive direction of travel.

Monitoring Performance

Fires where people work, visit and in vehicles is showing an overall increase in fires where people work, visit and in vehicles of 8.1% (up to 586 from 542) during Q3 and Q4 2018/19 compared to previous year, however this is still within tolerance. Year-to-date figures are showing an overall increase of 11.4%, this is largely due to higher above average levels of fires in the first two quarters of 2018/19.

Negative Performance

Fire-related deaths where people work, visit and in vehicles is in exception due to three fire-related deaths during Q3 and Q4 2018/19. Rolling three and five-year-trends are showing an upward direction of travel for total and deliberate fire-related deaths.

Fire-related injuries where people live is showing a 27.8% increase (up to 46 from 36) in fire-related injuries in Q3 and Q4 2018/19. Three and five-year-trends are indicating an upward trend for total and accidental fires.

Measure Status


The performance status of reportable measures is established through analysis of performance vs previous year and medium / long term trends. Where a measure is reported as an exception an exception report will be included in the document. This report will provide additional information and analysis relating to the measure and will identify whether further action should be considered at this point.













Statuses: ✓ = Good Performance ! = Monitor Performance ✗ = Negative Exception

KPI No.	Description	Status	Page
1	Fire-related deaths where people live	✓	7
2	Fire-related injuries where people live	✗	7
3	Fires where people live	✓	7
4	Fire-related deaths where people work, visit and in vehicles	✗	16
5	Fire-related injuries where people work, visit and in vehicles	✓	16
6	Fires where people work, visit and in vehicles	!	16
7	Emergency Response Standard - first appliance in attendance at fires where people live within 10 minutes of emergency call answer	✓	25
8	Emergency Response Standard - first appliance in attendance at Road Traffic Collisions within 15 minutes of emergency call answer	✓	25

Performance Measures 1-3

Measure 1: Fire-related deaths where people live


Status 













	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.	YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.	Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	0	2	-100.0% 	3	5	-40.0% 		
Accidental	0	2	-100.0% 	3	5	-40.0% 		
Deliberate	0	0	0.0% 	0	0	0.0% 		

There have been no fire-related deaths where people live in either Q3 or Q4 2018/19. All trends are indicating a positive direction of travel.

It must be noted that the number of deaths are very low and therefore even slight changes can lead to seemingly dramatic percentage change.

Measure 2: Fire-related injuries where people live

Status 

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.	YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.	Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	46	36	27.8% 	81	76	6.6% 		
Accidental	43	33	30.3% 	73	68	7.4% 		
Deliberate	3	3	0.0% 	8	8	0.0% 		













This measure is in exception due to a 27.8% increase (up to 46 from 36) in fire-related injuries in Q3 and Q4 2018/19.

Three and five-year-trends are indicating an upward trend for total and accidental fires.

An exception report providing further information is available on page eight of this report.

Measure 3: Fires where people live

Status 

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.	YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.	Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	480	557	-13.8% 	923	1060	-12.9% 		
Accidental	447	520	-14.0% 	851	980	-13.2% 		
Deliberate	33	37	-10.8% 	72	80	-10.0% 		

There has been a 13.8% reduction in fires where people live Q3 and Q4 2018/19 compared to the same period in the previous year. All three-year-trends are indicating a positive direction of travel with the overall five-year-trend showing a level trend.

Deliberate fires are showing an upward five-year-trend, however numbers are relatively low and performance against previous year is positive.

Exception report: fire-related injuries where people live

Measure 2: Fire-related injuries where people live

Status ✘

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.	YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.	Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	46	36	27.8% ✘	81	76	6.6% !	↑	↑
Accidental	43	33	30.3% ✘	73	68	7.4% !	↑	↑
Deliberate	3	3	0.0% !	8	8	0.0% !	↓	↑

Why is this an exception?

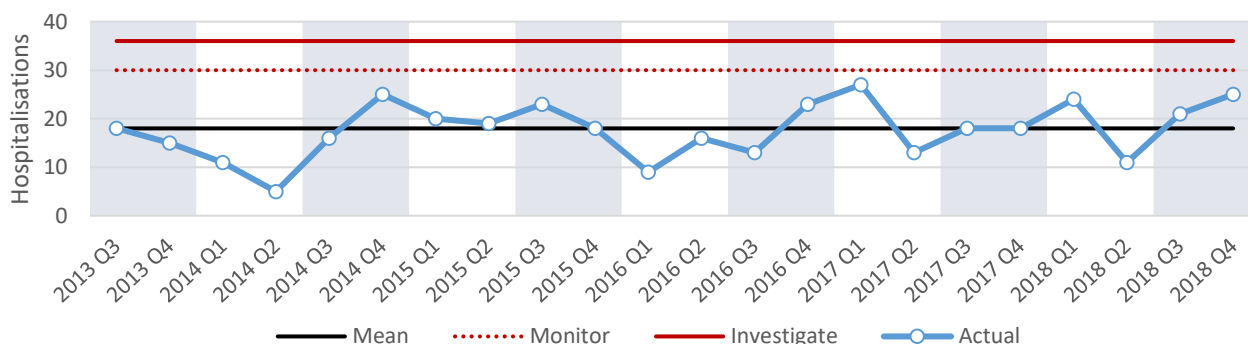
This measure is in exception to a 27.8% increase (up to 46 from 36) in fire related injuries in Q3 and Q4 2018/19.

Three and five-year-trends are indicating an upward trend for total fire-related injuries where people live and those resulting from accidental fires.

Analysis

The number of fire-related injuries resulting in hospitalisation has increased slightly compared to previous year, however the data shows that the number of injuries remains within normal levels of variation.

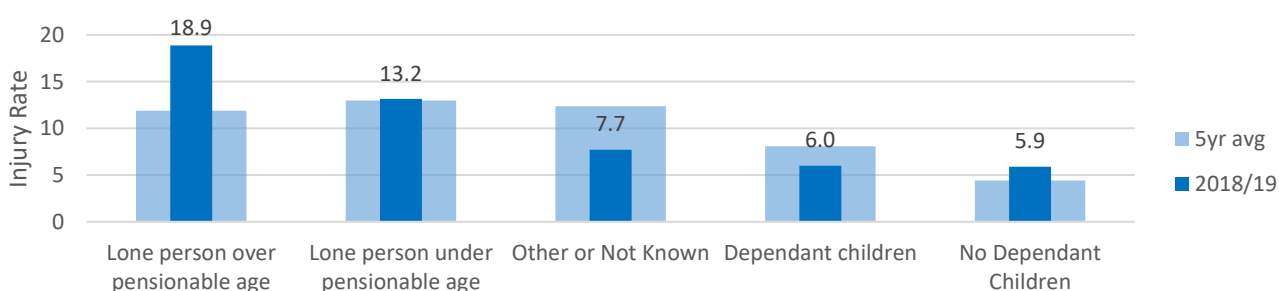
Chart 1: Number of fire-related injuries resulting in hospitalisation with tolerances ¹



In 2018/19, there were 65 fires in the home that resulted in one or more injuries that required hospital treatment. This equates to nine fires for every 100,000 households.

The likelihood of a fire in the home resulting in an injury varies significantly depending upon the household composition. The highest rate of fire-related injuries are seen within households that have a lone occupant over pensionable age. These households have 135% more fires resulting in hospitalisation than the DSFRS average.

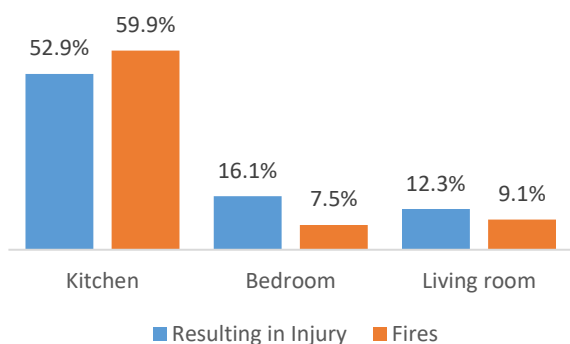
Chart 2: Rate of fires per 100,000 households by household composition



¹Tolerance: monitor = two standard deviation above mean, investigate = three standard deviations above mean.

Measures 1-3 Details

Chart 3: Percentage of fires where people live by top start locations 2016/17 to 18/19

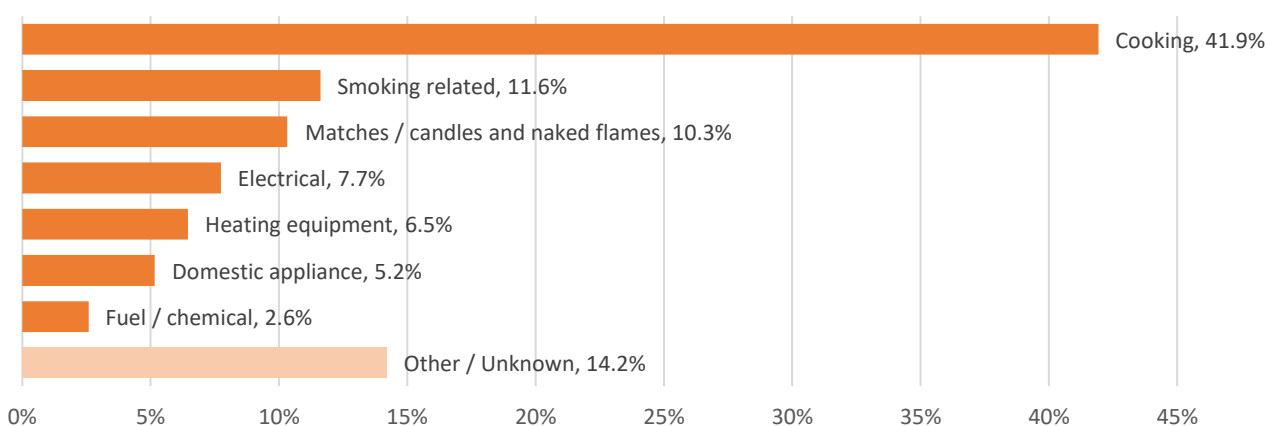


As with all fires where people live, the most prevalent fire start location for incidents resulting in hospitalisation is the kitchen.

However, the data indicates that while most injuries result from fires of this type, a fire originating in the bedroom is two-and-a-half times more likely to result in a significant injury, and a fire in the living room one-and-a-half times more likely.

Unsurprisingly, the source of ignition is most commonly cooking related (41.9%), with smoking materials (11.6%) and matches, candles and naked flames (10.3%).

Chart 4: Percentage injuries and fires where people live by source of ignition 2016/17 to 18/19



Actions required

While the number of fires have increased slightly compared to previous year the quarterly figures are well within normal levels of variation.

Home safety targeting focuses on fatal risk factors, however there is commonality between factors that lead to increased likelihood of injury e.g. living alone.

The Service's "Look While You Cook" safety message is focused on reducing cooking-related fires and is integrated into community safety engagement.

There are no further actions recommended at this time, other than to continue to monitor performance over the coming months.

Measures 1-3 Commentary

Community Safety Prevention Activities

In the 12 months from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 the Service conducted over 9,000 targeted Home Safety Visits to households identified as needing our expert guidance and support.

The Service works closely with colleagues in other agencies and third sector organisations to build partnerships that enable it to ensure that resources provide maximum benefit to the community.

Engagement with local communities is conducted in a variety of ways including educating children and young people through schools talks and structured programmes such as Fire Cadets, Phoenix and FireSetters. In addition to the Home Safety Visit activities, from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, the Service undertook around 5,000 preventative activities to improve public safety.

Central Operations Update

The new home safety app was rolled out to the technician team in September and October 2018 and has been fully live for almost 6 months. The change of delivery model has improved consistency of delivery and the overall quality of home safety visits.

The Service aims to reach those most at risk within the communities through referrals for home safety visits from partners identifying the most vulnerable households. The introduction of the central booking team for visits has also impacted the number of partner referrals by freeing up group based staff to engage with partners and generate referrals for visits rather than booking visits as in the previous delivery model. As a result, the number of home safety visits from partner referrals have improved significantly to almost 4,500 in 2018/19 (compared with 8,000 in the previous 4 years combined), with nearly 3,000 referrals in the second half of 2018/19. This figure is expected to rise further in 2019/20 with a whole year of proactive referral generation possible. The number of referring partners is now 372 up from 285 in the previous year.

Fire Cadets is a programme open to young people between the ages of 13 to 17. The programme runs over a full school year and within this time, the Cadets are also expected and encouraged to take part in social actions within their communities. Every week (school term) Cadets attend one of the four Fire Cadet Stations for two hours to take part in firefighter activities.

During the reporting period, the Service has delivered 21 cadet drill nights for attended by a total of **38 cadets** who have worked towards their BTEC qualification.

Phoenix helps build self-esteem, confidence and develops leadership and team working skills. The course helps improve communication skills and increase motivation as a stepping stone to future success. It recognizes and rewards achievement, broadens experience develops employability and communication skills. The course makes young people aware of the risks and possible consequences of anti- social behaviour and encourages more responsible behaviour.

During the reporting period, the Service has run two, five-day Phoenix courses that have been attended by a total of **24 students**.

Safeguarding The Safeguarding Team continues to provide a range of safeguarding awareness training for staff, including induction sessions for all new staff and targeted training for operational staff.

The number of safeguarding referrals received via the Service single point of contact has continued to rise over the last quarter, with the greatest increase coming from operational crews. Home Safety Technicians have been supported by the Safeguarding Team in their attendance at

Measures 1-3 Commentary

multi-agency meetings; these have led to improved and safer living conditions and positive outcomes for a number of the most vulnerable individuals in our Community.

Presentations to the Safeguarding Boards across our Service area have led to an increased number of referrals for Home Safety Visits and the sharing with us of Level 1 risk information by our partners.

Between October 2018 and March 2019 there have been 40 referrals (120 individual visits) by our Fire-setter Advisers.

Referrals continue to be received from a range of agencies including Youth Offending, Early Help and Schools.

There has been an increase in the number of group sessions provided for young people identified as being at risk of becoming involved in fire-setting.

A number of our Fire-setter Advisers have completed Train the Trainer sessions, which will impact positively on our training and quality assurance programmes.

Service Delivery Update

East Devon

During Q3 & Q4 2018/19 East Devon Group has increased its number of Partners by 9% to 97 and has received a total 884 home safety referrals from Partners overall.

The Group have focused on providing support to some of its quieter Partners and as a result have seen a steady increase in the number of referrals generated.

The success of the partnership with the Memory Cafes continues and is now expanding to locations throughout East Devon. The partnership enables the Group to engage with some of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach members of the community.

The Group have worked in collaboration with Devon & Cornwall Police at Crime Safety Roadshows in Seaton providing home safety messages and generating referrals.

Work with Budleigh Health Hub is continuing, complimentary services join to provide a one-stop-shop for the needs of local communities, holding regular home safety surgeries at the former cottage hospital, with a catchment of over 45,000 residents.

The Group have gained contact, positive engagement and trust within individual premises at the Travellers site at Haldon, enabling home fire safety messages to be delivered and equipment fitted as required.

Advocates visited multiple Flu Clinics to give home safety advice and generate a large number of quality referrals.

The Group has engaged with each its Wholtime Watches to provide input on targeted referrals, providing them with an open approach to generating the required 25 referrals a month.

The Group were invited to speak at the Exeter Forum group meeting, giving home safety information and answering questions. The event resulted in the generation of a number of quality referrals.

Other events attended include: Bampton Fair, Outreach Group talks, National Landlords Association and the Association of Residential Letting Agents – Renting Minefield.

Measures 1-3 Commentary

East Somerset

East Somerset Group is continuing to work with its established partners, all of which are providing a high number of good-quality, targeted referrals. In particular, the partnership with the District Council's South Somerset Careline continues to be one of the most productive in terms of referral quality and numbers.

A number of new partnerships are in the process of being signed off including Altogether Care, British Red Cross (Weston Hospital), Home Instead Senior Care.

Newly established partnerships include local doctor's surgeries and the Royal Voluntary Services' home book service, the Blind Veterans charity and South Somerset Environmental Health.

The Group have recently revisited Yarlington Housing Group and delivered Trigger Point Training to their staff which was well received. The training provides partners with the knowledge they need to households that are more vulnerable to fire in the home.

Development and support of additional effective partnerships to assist in the targeting of the most vulnerable members of our community will continue to be the main focus for 2019/20.

East Somerset continues to attend at all One Team multi-agency forums at both operational and tactical levels. This has raised the profile of the Service and has given access to some extremely vulnerable people through sharing of intelligence.

The Group continue to review existing partnership arrangements to ensure that we have named contacts for each partner organisation and have signed copies of the updated agreements/contracts that are GDPR compliant. This work will be accompanied by continued support for partners, ensuring they are not meeting resistance in referring people to us and that they still understand the partnership process and expectations.

East Somerset continue to engage with vulnerable users living under large landlords, notably Aster and Yarlington Housing, through community events and fire safety talks. While there are partnerships with both these organisations, numbers of referrals don't reflect the amount of people housed. The use of coffee mornings coordinated with the housing provider have been a more effective way of spreading fire safety messages and gathering good referrals.

There have been 95 engagements with sheltered housing, supported living and extra care schemes. Nearly all of the people we engage with at these events fall within key target groups. This engagement has included the 'Look while you cook' message. The relevance of this is backed up by some of the behaviours and observations made by the residents during the visit e.g. they have often forgotten the pan or would use a damp tea-towel to extinguish a fire.

It is hoped that this work will become standard practice across the Service, spreading a safety message, embedding safe behaviours and doing it in a timely and cost effective manner to complement the work done by the Home Safety Technicians.

North Devon

'One' Ilfracombe continues to deliver quality referrals of high risk persons. This success has been influenced by one of the Group's the Station Managers being on the board of directors, helping to shape the delivery of the One Team. One Barnstaple is in the process of being set up, a Station Manager is involved in this which will aid more quality referrals.

Measures 1-3 Commentary

"One Northern Devon" focuses on the 10 year wellbeing strategy for the area is supported by the Group Commander. Following an organisational restructure that will be effective from April 2019, this work will not sit within Group, a decision must be taken as to whether the Service will continue to support it in future and if so identify the resources early to allow the benefits to be fully realised.

The Police and Fire Community Support Officer partnership is being re-energised to ensure that the Service has access to the Police staff for prevention and protection duties on a more regular basis.

The North Devon team has attended a number of health and wellbeing events organised by partners, delivering safety messages and generating referrals. Events attended include:

- Drink wise age well; Hatherleigh and South Molton
- Active Mind; Barnstaple Library
- Carers Support Groups; North Devon
- Parkinson's group; Barnstaple
- Balance Classes; North Devon District Hospital and Torrington
- Stroke groups; South Molton
- Look when you cook demo; Fremington

The Group have set up displays in a number of GP surgeries, these provide further information to support the home safety messages that are played on TV screens in waiting rooms.

The North Devon Group Community Safety Champion (CSC) visited an elderly lady in Bideford who was the victim of a small fire. The CSC arranged a Home Fire Safety Visit but also signposted the victim to other partner agencies including Intagr8 and Neighbourhood Chaplains. As a result she has now been successfully befriended and is settled.

South Devon

Centralisation of the Home Fire Safety booking process has released capacity within the Group and enabled increased focus to be placed on engaging with external service providers who work with the most vulnerable members of our communities with a view to generating new, high quality partnerships.

The Group has also re-engaged with existing partners to support them to increase the number of quality referrals generated.

As well as seeking partners that work with the most vulnerable we have also targeted partnership groups in more remote areas of South Devon, where fire cover and Emergency Response Standards are harder to achieve. Some examples are mental health teams, community nursing teams, and groups connected to GP surgeries in areas including the Teign-valley, Dartmoor and Dartmouth.

This targeted partnership work led to a 28% increase in Home Fire Safety Visits during February, a significant success story, particularly as February is a short month. Effective partnership working is key to ensuring that referrals are generated for household in the community that are most in need of support.

In addition to increased numbers the Group have observed that there is a greater proportion of home safety visits that are of a complex nature, often with safeguarding connections. This demonstrates the effectiveness of targeted partnerships, however effect of this on the wellbeing of technicians delivering the visits is under review as a priority centrally.

Measures 1-3 Commentary

West Devon

Operation Hestia is a joint initiative between the Police and the Fire Service to address social issues around the city. A firefighter and a local Police Community Support Officer are working together in the community to reduce:

- Arson
- Anti-social behaviour
- Road Traffic Collisions
- Police logs.

This positive action is designed to jointly tackle issues surrounding welfare and safeguarding through a collaborative approach.

Following an increase in incidents at the three Devonport towers the team in West Devon engaged in an initiative to revisit individual flats. This focused on fire safety themes around kitchen/cooking safety. Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) were fully supportive of this new initiative.

Operational crews from Plymouth were allocated a tower each and given ownership of completing the visits. This involved daytime and evening visits.

Operational crews managed to complete approximately two-thirds (180 of 270) of visits. The Group Support Team (GST) then took over and joint visits were booked with PCH to engage with the outstanding occupiers.

Chip pans were replaced with thermostatic controlled fryers, fire doors were replaced, fire retardant throws and bedding packs were issued along with extension leads. A number of vulnerable persons were identified, safeguarded and followed up with ongoing support.

Devon and Cornwall Police approached West Group in 2018 asking to launch the Safe Bus Scheme. The aim of the bus was to ease pressure on the hospital during weekend evenings. The bus was staffed by St Johns Ambulance, Street Pastors and the Police. It was based in Plymouth City Centre on Saturday nights throughout the Summer of 2018. Fire Service personnel from Plympton station delivered the bus at 21:00 and collected it at 04:00 the following morning. Timings have since changed but given its success D&C Police have requested its attendance throughout the Summer of 2019. The Safe Bus has helped many people get home safely and has been pivotal in Plymouth's campaign for Purple Flag Status. This has been a really positive opportunity to collaborate with partner agencies as we strive to support our local communities.

West Somerset

West Somerset Group are balancing the work of finding new partnerships with maintaining existing ones whilst transitioning to the new Service Deliver Model.

The Group is working with new partners including ARC (formerly Taunton Association for the Homeless) and Somerset Care (the largest home care provider in the South West), providing trigger point training for their staff to help them recognise fire safety issues within homes.

West Somerset continue to work with the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) who provide the Village and Community Agents service. The CCS previously requested the Group meet an elderly couple in Taunton who they had concerns about. The couple in their 90s had lived there all their married lives. During a meeting at their home, our community safety team member identified risks with the gas and electrical services in the home. CCS commissioned and paid for an urgent electrical test and gas safety check. The gas installation was able to be repaired and re-commissioned quickly, but the electrical circuits were in a very poor state and dangerous. A quick meeting was held the relevant partners and an action plan agreed.

Measures 1-3 Commentary

Home Fire Safety referrals are now managed centrally via the Home Fire Safety team and supported by local technicians. The Group are working harder than ever to join up with other agencies to enhance the provision of safety advice and prevention activity.

Performance Measures 4-6

Measure 4: Fire-related deaths where people work, visit and in vehicles

Status ✘

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.		YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.		Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	3	0	NA	✘	5	1	400.0%	✘	↑	↑
Accidental	2	0	NA	✘	4	1	300.0%	✘	↔	↔
Deliberate	1	0	NA	✘	1	0	NA	✘	↑	↑

This measure is in exception due to three fire-related deaths during Q3 and Q4 2018/19. Rolling three and five-year-trends are showing an upward direction of travel for total and deliberate fire-related deaths.

It must be noted that the number of deaths are very low and therefore even slight changes can lead to seemingly dramatic percentage change.

An exception report providing further information is available on page 17 of this report.

Measure 5: Fire-related injuries where people work, visit and in vehicles

Status ✔

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.		YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.		Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	7	14	-50.0%	✔	22	32	-31.3%	✔	↑	↔
Accidental	5	8	-37.5%	✔	14	21	-33.3%	✔	↑	↓
Deliberate	2	6	-66.7%	✔	8	11	-27.3%	✔	↑	↑

There has been a 50.0% reduction (down to 7 from 14) in fire-related injuries where people work, visit and in vehicles during Q3 and Q4 2018/19.

While the three-year-trends show an upward direction of travel, the five-year-trends are variable.

Measure 6: Fires where people work, visit and in vehicles

Status !

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.		YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.		Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	586	542	8.1%	!	1370	1230	11.4%	✘	↑	↓
Accidental	414	385	7.5%	!	999	889	12.4%	✘	↑	↓
Deliberate	172	157	9.6%	!	371	341	8.8%	!	↓	↑

This measure requires monitoring. While there has been an overall increase in fires where people work, visit and in vehicles of 8.1% (up to 586 from 542) during Q3 and Q4 2018/19 compared to previous year this is still within tolerance. Year-to-date figures are showing an overall increase of 11.4% however, this is largely due to higher above average levels of fires in the first two quarters of 2018/19.

Measures 4-6 Details

Measure 4: Fire-related deaths where people work, visit and in vehicles

Status ✘

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	Var.		YTD 18/19	YTD 17/18	Var.		Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	3	0	NA	✘	5	1	400.0%	✘	↑	↑
Accidental	2	0	NA	✘	4	1	300.0%	✘	↔	↔
Deliberate	1	0	NA	✘	1	0	NA	✘	↑	↑

Why is this an exception?

This measure is in exception due to three fire-related deaths during quarters three and four 2018/19.

Year-to-date performance is showing slight decline compared to previous year. Rolling three and five-year trends are variable.

The low numbers recorded within this measure should be noted. Even minor fluctuations will lead to dramatic changes to percentages and trends.

Analysis

The three fatalities where people work, visit and in vehicles reported resulted from separate incidents.

1) Incident one occurred on the 1st October 2018. The victim was a 31-year-old male, thought to be sleeping in the garage, who died as a result of a combination of burns and being overcome by gas/smoke. The fire started accidentally as a result of combustible articles being placed too close to a heat source. The fire is estimated to have been discovered between 30-120 minutes after it started, with an emergency call placed to the fire service immediately after discovery at 05:01. Awaiting Coroner's Inquest; investigations ongoing.

2) Incident two occurred on the 18th February 2019. The victim was a 71-year-old male who died as a result of a combination of burns and being overcome by gas/smoke. The fire was started intentionally through deliberate ignition of own property, with the purpose of suicide. The emergency call to the fire service was received at 14:09. Due to the extent of the fire, the source of ignition could not be determined. Awaiting Coroner's Inquest; investigations ongoing.

3) Incident three occurred on the 21st March 2019. The victim was a 74-year-old male who was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics. The fire is estimated to have been discovered between 5-30 minutes after it started, with the call being placed to the fire service within 5 minutes of discovery at 07:26. Due to the extent of the fire, further information is unavailable at this time. Awaiting Coroner's Inquest; investigations ongoing.

Action required

No further action is required at this time. Incidents will remain "live" until the result of the Coroner's Inquest is received and the cause of death confirmed.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

Community Safety Protection Activities

DSFRS has a statutory obligation to ensure that non-domestic premises and public events are compliant with fire safety regulations. From 01 October 2017 to 30 September 2018 the Service conducted over 4,000 fire safety checks, nearly 900 fire safety audits and just under 8,500 other protection activities to ensure public safety.

Central Operations Update

The Service is adopting the Short Audit process as part of suite of Business Safety activities. The Short Audit provides a qualitative approach to the initial evaluation of what is being managed or done in premises to control risk and ensure safety of people in case of fire. User acceptance testing has been completed by Business Safety staff at Exeter and the ICT department. The new letters have been checked, vetted and amended as necessary and are ready to be used. However, planned upgrades to the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) to implement an electronic version of the short audit have been delayed. This is due to a new ICT Development project that aims to improve how the Service manages risk information.

Staff will be trained on the new process in April from which point the Short Audit will become business as usual activity, albeit on paper forms.

Under the Licensing Act 2003 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO), the licensing authority is required to consult and give Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) the opportunity to make representation with regards to public safety (fire safety), before issuing the license.

The local licensing authority are responsible for administrating and issuing premises licences. The licensing authority cannot impose any fire safety conditions, which fall under the scope of the FSO, as this is enforced by DSFRS.

As part of the consultation process, DSFRS will assess the nature of the application, premises type and the fire precautions detailed in the application to ensure public safety, before determining the appropriate outcome. This may result in us requesting further information, providing you with further fire safety advice and guidance or a fire safety audit may be conducted of the premises.

Following meetings arranged with Licensing Forums to gain advice and expectations on how we respond to applications a new licensing policy has been written and is waiting acceptance.

A new guidance note has been written in line with government guidance and is now available to staff; five new licensing letters have been produced to assist staff in replying to applications.

In line with guidance a document is now available on the DSFRS website to assist applicants in applying for a licence.

Training has been provided to Business Safety staff during a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) day at Service Headquarters. Supporting personnel to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills is essential to ensure that the Service can provide the best support it can to the business community, delivering its statutory obligations consistently and in line with best practice.

East Devon

Work continues in partnership with Exeter City Council, East Devon and Mid Devon District Council's Environmental Health Private Sector Housing and Licensing teams. This work spans both their own housing stock as well as private sector housing. Engagement has included consultations, inspections and support to the local authority officers improving means of escape and improving and maintaining fire safety in the communal areas.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

An inspection programme, based on Fire Risk Event Data has continued throughout the quarter. The information provided has led to more efficient targeting of higher risk premises and many of those visited have led to further action or enforcement.

The Group has continued to complete Fire Safety Checks since the previous quarter resulting in a number of Fire Safety Audits.

The Group continues to visit care homes in line with the centrally driven targeting strategy. This has resulted in a number of fire safety audits with a range of outcomes.

Prohibition Notice and Enforcement Notices have been served following targeted inspections, response to fire safety complaints from members of the public and concerns raised by other Regulatory bodies .

East Devon Group has continued to receive a high number of Building Regulation Consultations, of varying size and complexity, during Q3 & Q4 2018/19 . The Group has continued, with support from DSFRS Fire Engineers, to strive for effective and manageable fire safety within the built environment whilst also ensuring adequate measures are in place to support firefighter safety.

Work resulting from the tragedy at Grenfell has now been largely completed and has been integrated into business as usual processes. Information on cladding systems installed across health care and educational premises will continue to be collated through telephone enquiries and site visits.

Partnership work with Local Authorities has led to the following local initiatives:

- continued support to East Devon District Council to ensure compliance with the council's sterile policy in its social housing, completing joint inspection visits. This work has expanded to include inspections of blocks of flats managed and owned by Private Sector parties to identify non-compliant fire doors and other means of escape issues.
- continued to support Exeter City Council in the implementation of their 'Clear and Safe' policy in their social housing blocks. The 'Clear and Safe' policy is now up and running and the Business Safety Team provides advice and joint visits when requested. This work includes attendance at Rogue Landlord meetings and any subsequent joint inspections.

East Somerset

Work continues to educate local private schools on fire safety. The aims are is to reduce the number fire calls to these premises and complete Fire Safety Checks and Audits to ensure compliance with regulations, particularly in premises containing a sleeping risk. The talks are aimed at House Masters and those responsible for fire safety. The follow up inspections have highlighted fire safety issues, with Notification of Deficiencies letters being sent in some instances.

Partnership work with Cornish Mutual supporting the farming community continues to work well, with positive engagements with Cornish Mutual at The Dairy Show and Frome markets.

Following a recent fire in an "Escape Room" in Poland where five teenagers tragically lost their lives, the Group identified three of these premises within its area. Escape rooms involve participants being locked in a room, requiring them to solve clues to escape and are becoming increasingly popular. All three premises have received Fire Safety Checks during the last quarter, two of the three premises progressing to audits where further action has been required.

Targeted fire safety inspections continue using the Fire Risk Event Data which greatly assists officers to identify risky premises.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

The team look forward to the Business Safety Team restructure and continuing to utilise the data to support the introduction of the short audit process.

Somerset East Group continues to work with local partners through Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) across South Somerset and Mendip. Recent inspections have taken place at Yeovil Town Football Club and Wincanton racecourse to support the Local Authority in enforcing the Fire Safety Order. The SAGs are supporting both venues to review Fire and Emergency plans following the introduction of the sixth edition of the 'Safety at Sports Grounds Guide'.

South Somerset SAG have been working with event organisers to achieve compliance following concerns raised at two large music events. The SAG has objected to the license of the 'Shindig festival' on the ground of Public Safety and the 'One Love Festival' is facing legal challenges following safety concerns and licence breaches at their event.

The Group have been supporting Night Time Economy activities, working with partner agencies to make local towns safer, vibrant and more attractive at night. Business Safety Officers have attended another night of action accompanying Police, Local Authority Licencing and Environmental Health Officers with coordinated inspections of licenced premises. Our role has been to ensure premises are maintaining compliance under the Fire Safety Order and provided a good opportunity to check nightclubs and public houses during busy periods. The evening highlighted a number of premises with fire safety deficiencies that require follow up inspections. Currently the work has focused activity in and around the Yeovil area, but this is due to be extended into other towns within the current Group structure.

The Group is still managing a high number of premises where prohibitions, enforcement notices and action plans are in place. Currently there are fourteen prohibition notices, twenty enforcement notices and two action plans in place.

The team is engaging with Responsible Persons in liaison with partner agencies to assist and support businesses to achieve compliance. Non-compliance, prohibition and subsequent enforcement notices have been issued on a number of grade II listed premises. The Group have gained valuable knowledge in dealing with these heritage buildings in recent months with the support of organisational specialists; which has been achieved through various meetings at listed premises and an organised training event at Service Headquarters.

It is anticipated that the Fire Risk Event Data will identify more heritage premises in the coming months. It is expected that this sector will require further education/work once the delivery plan and inspection strategy is established and up and running.

North Devon

Through enhanced links with Cornish Mutual Insurance the protection team has delivered farm safety to over 100 farmers identifying risks and mitigating measures with their businesses.

The team have presented to over 60 Holiday let owners from across the North Devon area offering valuable advice around fire safety within Holiday lets

A member of the North Devon team has presented to the Institute of Clerk of Works AGM highlighting the fire protection requirements for new builds especially after the Grenfell tragedy.

The Barnstaple Group protection team has delivered 'Continual Professional Development' to DSFRS staff, other FRS staff and stakeholders to increase the knowledge of Heritage building risk.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

Joint Inspection Programmes with North Devon District council and Torrington District council are expanding. Joint Inspections see Service personnel supporting Environmental Health officers during inspections of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HiMO). The initiative started in Ilfracombe and is now embedded within Barnstaple, South Molton, Combe Martin, Bideford and Torrington. The inspections mainly target converted premises and high risk occupants. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required to ensure this activity continues within the Torrington District Council area.

The Group have used the Service's Fire Risk Event Data and referrals from the Care Quality Commission, local council Licensing team, Ofsted, complaints and intelligence gained at operation incidents to target delivery of Fire Safety Checks (FSCs) by wholtime watches and protection advocates.

There has been a recent dip in fire Safety Checks due to one of the three advocates leaving the Service and another being on leave. This has highlighted that the current approach to delivery may pose resilience issues.

The Protection team in North Devon are mentoring new Firefighters to enable them to gain the Level 3 protection qualification, allowing them to audit premises.

The protection team has given all the on-call and wholtime staff within North Devon refresher training on dangerous conditions to allow them to identify these issues whilst at incidents and ensure they are dealt with appropriately.

South Devon

Prosecution work is ongoing from inspections of an Airbnb in Torquay which is likely to result in legal proceedings.

Partnership working with Local Authority Housing Officers to reduce the risk in Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HiMO) is ongoing, as a result the criteria for licensing of HiMOs increased in November 2018. This requires licenses to be issued for smaller premises meeting the threshold criteria.

Recent multi-agency activity has taken place in relation to Modern Slavery, several bodies were involved in this project including Police, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, Housing Officers, Immigration and Safeguarding Officers. The Group has numerous, successful partnerships that provide the bulk of the most effective visits undertaken within the area.

Compliance events are taking place with presentations provided for Licensing and Landlords forums. Attendance and support provided at Public Safety Advisory Groups is continuing.

Officers have attended several large gatherings prior to events taking place and conducted Special Event Checks, providing support and advice to continue to reduce the risks to members of the public. In particular preparation is taking place for the forthcoming Air shows within the group area and the BMAD festivals.

Shadowing, training and support is being provided for staff new to Business Safety and who are undergoing level three training by the Service. Fire Safety Audits and Checks continue to be followed up by Officers as a result of Watch Fire Safety Checks. The Business Safety structure is undergoing a transition period and Officers are awaiting the strategy and risk profile for the forthcoming year from the Capability Lead.

The Group has performed well against its planned delivery during 2018/19, with the exception of Fire Safety Checks which saw 372 delivered compared to the target of 600. It is worth noting there has been a marked increase in Building Regulation consultations (370 from 250) and four Prosecutions within this time period. Both of these activities are resource heavy both in time and technical skills.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

West Devon

Dockyard familiarisation visits have been completed following an incident that occurred in the Frigate Support Centre. It was agreed to embark on a series of familiarisation visits to cover all operational staff in the Plymouth area to ensure that we continue to deliver the highest level of response to the risks in the West Devon area.

The Group have arranged further visits and have now completed two separate day visits for flexi duty officers whose rota may require them to cover Plymouth. This was well attended with at least eight or nine on each day from Area Manager level down. The feedback received has stated that this visit was extremely beneficial and hopefully this will trigger more staff visiting regularly, access issues permitting.

The Group continue to support the Best Bar None (BBN) initiative. Our activity in the last 12 months includes attending steering group meetings, providing expert guidance and undertaking bespoke fire safety training events & presentations.

These events are free to BBN members and cover-

Fire Safety Order – legal requirements of licensees and owners
Door staff training – means of escape, occupancies etc.

Best Bar None is an Accreditation Scheme with National Awards supported by the Home Office and the drinks industry which is aimed primarily at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises. The overarching objective is to improve safety within licenced premises (including fire safety), reduce anti-social behaviour and to encourage Plymouth's night time economy.

BBN is run by the licensed trade with strong partnership between police, local authorities and trade and has been running for approximately 10 years. (Used to be known as City Safe).

Since DSFRS involvement, scheme membership has increased with membership being from a mixture of national brands and independent venues.

In addition, the Group support funding which assists Best Bar None in continuing to deliver this important work. To date, DSFRS have committed around £6000 to the Best Bar None Scheme.

In early November the West Devon Group Commander represented DSFRS at their annual awards ceremony held at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Plymouth. This event was to recognise the achievements of scheme members and to thank Partner's for ongoing support. DSFRS took part in a BBN promotional video to showcase the Awards ceremony and the scheme.

Plymouth BBN scheme attended the House of Lords on Monday 4 February and was awarded Best National Scheme for a second year running, the only scheme to have retained the title two years in a row.

Attendance at the BBN steering group has led to further events supported by the service such as-

Attendance at Plymouth University Fresher Fayre to promote fire safety for students;
RTC reduction & driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs – Scheduled TBC;
Water Safety Awareness – due to proximity of licenced venues to the waterfront.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

Due to the specialist rescue activities undertaken at Camels Head the group have been working more closely with our partner agencies. This has included undertaking initial scoping meetings to familiarise crews with the capabilities of each organisation and collaboration at operational incidents.

In the last 12 months watches have been allocated geographical areas of coastline as point of contact. They have facilitated joint training events on station and undertaken exercises. This is an ongoing relationship and built into the station performance expectations set by the group.

Feedback has confirmed that this has been extremely beneficial to both organisations

The Group is participating in the Redeeming our Community (ROC) forum to help celebrate the good that is already happening in our community. ROC's primary focus is to influence community transformation by creating strategic partnerships between statutory agencies, voluntary groups and churches. Helping to identify the key issues that need addressing and suggesting practical solutions.

ROC Conversations have made a difference in over 160 communities in the UK. As one person described it, "Great and encouraging event and something I'd love to get involved in. Great for all the community to be together", another person said, "I feel like we've really achieved something!"

Personnel from Station 57, Tavistock, have attended Action Group meetings on a quarterly basis to engage with the scheme, the community and to see how best we can become more involved as a service.

West Somerset

The Group's Business Safety Team continues to work in line with Service expectations and is now seeing a greater proportion of inspection activities leading to formal enforcement action and consideration for prosecution where necessary.

West Somerset has embedded an officer within the Hinkley Point C (HPC) team who has focused on business safety checks and visits to premises and businesses that offer accommodation to HPC staff such as hotels, B&B's, pubs with accommodation and caravan parks.

The team also submitted a detailed Christmas safety campaign to organisations including the EDF accommodation team, HPC campus accommodation teams and local authority housing teams linked to local landlords and businesses.

This was supplemented by an on-site Christmas safety campaign given to the EDF Fire Safety and Health and Safety teams for use with the contractors before the Christmas break.

The Group are supporting the transition to a new business operating model which will see the management of the business safety team migrate from Group to a central team, whilst still maintaining a geographical hub within Group.

Following a review of wholetime watch commitments, their work expectations and targets have increased to four fire safety checks per tour. These are a combination of Fire Risk Event Data led premises and an expansion of targeting fast food premises with accommodation. Targeting areas of Taunton and Bridgwater with a history of low compliance in areas of deprivation.

The Group have completed over 450 Fire safety checks (carried out by crews) which have resulted in 21 compliance events.

Measures 4-6 Commentary

The team have continued to undertake our statutory Building Regulation and licencing consultations within the appropriate timescales.

Operational crews are now supported by a bespoke Business Safety Officer either accompanying visits to develop staff or located in close proximity to enable a rapid response to fire safety contraventions – improving appliance availability.

Local Authority Environmental Health Officers, having seen the progress made to date in identifying and processing non-compliance by this Business Safety Team, now wish to investigate an expansion to facilitate joint inspection activity.





Availability of business safety advocates and fire safety advisors is limiting the capacity for fire safety checks in on-call stations areas, but it is aimed to recruit further advocates alongside community safety advocates in the last quarter.

Business safety specialist officers continue to carry out statutory consultations for both West and East Somerset groups as they have current staffing challenges. Specialist business safety officers continue to support wholtime watches and advocates through continual development and/or receiving referrals from fire safety checks and also inspecting premises of higher complexity in line with FRED data.

Partnerships with Avon and Somerset Police continue to be improved, with regular meetings to identify premises subject to the Fire Safety Order, that could indicate low standards of fire safety compliance but may also have links into Organised Crime Groups (OCG's) and vulnerable persons.




Performance Measures 7 & 8

Measure 7: Emergency Response Standard - first appliance in attendance at fires where people live within 10 minutes of emergency call answer

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	% pt. var.	YTD 2018	YTD 2017	% pt. var.	Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	72.5%	69.1%	3.4% 	72.5%	71.4%	1.1% 		

Data is showing improvement across all comparatives for ERS to fires where people live. Q3 and Q4 2018/19 has seen an improvement of 3.4% pt. compared to previous year, with year to date and rolling three and five-year-trends all indicating a positive direction of travel.

Measure 8: Emergency Response Standard - first appliance in attendance at Road Traffic Collisions within 15 minutes of emergency call answer

	Q3-Q4 18/19	Q3-Q4 17/18	% pt. var.	YTD 2018	YTD 2017	% pt. var.	Rolling 3 Year Trend	Rolling 5 Year Trend
Total	76.8%	74.3%	2.5% 	77.0%	75.1%	1.9% 		

Data is showing improvement across all comparatives for ERS to RTCs. Q3 and Q4 2018/19 has seen an improvement of 2.5% pt. compared to previous year, with year to date and rolling three and five-year-trends all indicating a positive direction of travel.

Measures 7-8 Commentary

East Devon

Organised modular assessments for firefighters are continuing to take place, facilitated within East Devon Group. This is proving successful in improving timescales for firefighters in development and thus improving fire cover.

The Group is continuing with pre-Incident Command Skills (ICS) assessments for Firefighters attending Level 1 ICS assessments.

The group continues to monitor ERS performance and work with all stations to minimise attendance times, this has facilitated delivery of Rapid Intervention Vehicles to Tiverton and Budleigh Salterton.

East Somerset

Stations in East Somerset have been actively planning crewing availability and identifying skills development opportunities for staff through appliance driving and incident command, to support appliance availability.

Crewing Coordinators continue to work with Community Firefighters and colleagues on the crewing pool to ensure appliance availability at key stations.

Somerset East are actively engaged in recruitment across the Group to ensure sufficient crewing is maintained; supporting availability, public and staff safety. This is being targeted to ensure that we recruit the best possible candidates, who will provide cover at the times when it is most needed and a workforce that is reflective of the community that we serve. The Group is actively engaging more with females and those from minority groups.

Recent recruitment campaigns at Frome and Chard have been particularly successful, and a "Have a go" day at Martock has just been delivered where members of the public were able to handle the equipment under controlled conditions.

North Devon

All the on-call stations within North Devon Group are currently under establishment, with recruitment proving to be a challenge. In order to increase first pump availability a decision was taken to pay staff for giving over their contracted hours, in times of need, to keep the pump available. This was offered to all stations in Group and capped so as to ensure work life balance, but has had a positive influence on the first pump availability.

The second pump availability is often impacted due to the crewing pool staff moving from their home station to support priority first appliances in other locations.

The Wholetime watches at Barnstaple are actively contacting the Operational Resource Centre if the watch has spare personnel to ensure they are used effectively to support stations within the Group, enhancing first pump availability.

South Devon

The on-call crews across the group have continued to struggle with traffic when responding to the station, which is having an adverse effect on ERS. The 'FIRE' signs being trialled at Newton Abbot will be evaluated. The results of this trial may encourage this system to be implemented service-wide.

The availability is adversely affected by the performance of some second and third appliances within the Group. It is anticipated that this will be improved through the introduction of different crewing models and

Measures 7-8 Commentary

changing appliances to reflect local risk profiles.

A flexible crewing arrangement at Dartmouth has seen improvements in the groups' availability. However due to a low establishment this station remains vulnerable to unforeseen staff issues such as short term sickness, and commitments to primary employment. A targeted recruitment campaign at is under-way, whilst all stations continue to advertise using the standard methods. The ambition is to increase the establishment at Dartmouth by targeting recruitment in a wider catchment area and promoting DSFRS as an inclusive employer.

The 'Have a go day' at Totnes attracted 24 people who are considering joining the on-call. These were spread from stations across the group, however no one from Dartmouth attended hence the recruitment drive above. The group will be working hard to maintain momentum for new applicants to assist them through the process in a speedy and effective manner.

West Devon

Since March 2018 West Devon Group have recruited 20 On Call Firefighters across seven stations and a further three potential recruits are at the medical stage and if passed will be placed onto training courses.

West Somerset

West Somerset Group are continuing to identify areas of reduced crew availability within its on-call stations and are working with these station management teams to understand and support these crewing issues.

Where recruitment is an issue the Group are working with local communities and businesses to encourage more applicants. A successful recruitment campaign in Taunton has resulted in over 10 applicants moving forwards to interview.

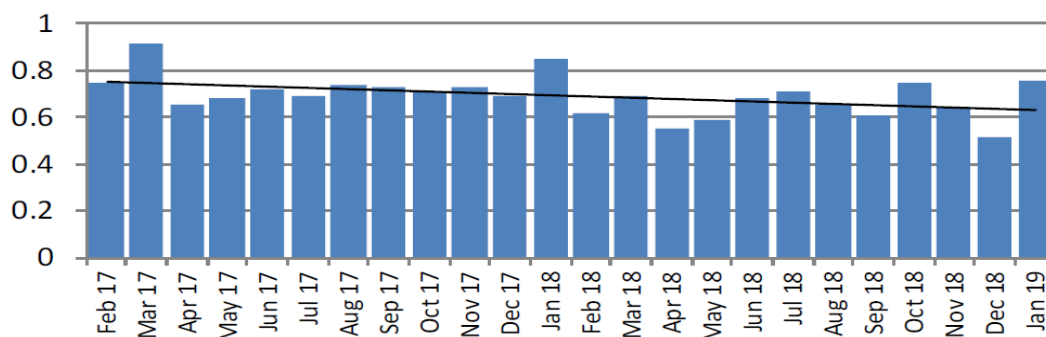
The 999 Academy at Bridgwater College hosted a graduation ceremony which was well supported by our partner 999 agencies and local businesses. Two of the graduates have gone on to join DSFRS and have just successfully completed their recruits course at Severn Park and now provide on-call cover at Bridgwater fire station.

Performance Overview - Sickness

Priority: Staff Safety - Sickness Rates

Measure Breakdown	Actual Apr-18 to Jan-19	Previous Apr-17 to Jan-18	% Variance
Sickness Rates (All Staff)	6.44	7.20	-10.50%

Average sick days taken per person, per month



Sickness Rates by Post Type Apr-18 to Jan-19	Wholetime Station Based Staff			Wholetime Non-Station Staff		
	Actual	Previous	% Var.	Actual	Previous	% Var.
Overall Sickness Rate	7.97	7.19	10.9%	3.98	5.67	-29.8%
Days / Shifts Lost	2990.0	2570.5	16.3%	748.5	1191.0	-37.2%
Sickness Rate - Long Term*	4.89	4.07	20.3%	2.36	3.83	-38.4%
Days / Shifts Lost - Long Term	1835.0	1453.5	26.2%	443.0	803.0	-44.8%
Sickness Rate - Short Term Cert**	1.26	1.14	10.0%	0.71	0.86	-16.9%
Days / Shifts Lost - ST Cert.	472.0	409.0	15.4%	134.0	180.0	-25.6%
Sickness Rate - Short Term***	1.82	1.98	-8.1%	0.91	0.99	-8.0%
Days / Shifts Lost - ST	683.0	708.0	-3.5%	171.5	208.0	-17.5%

Sickness Rates by Post Type Apr-18 to Jan-19	Control			Support Staff		
	Actual	Previous	% Var.	Actual	Previous	% Var.
Overall Sickness Rate	6.64	10.37	-36.0%	5.97	8.08	-26.1%
Days / Shifts Lost	225.2	366.5	-38.6%	1544.8	1941.1	-20.4%
Sickness Rate - Long Term	2.64	6.86	-61.5%	3.15	5.21	-39.5%
Days / Shifts Lost - Long Term	89.7	242.5	-63.0%	815.2	1250.6	-34.8%
Sickness Rate - Short Term Cert.	2.29	2.15	6.3%	1.07	0.99	8.6%
Days / Shifts Lost - ST Cert.	77.5	76.0	2.0%	277.0	237.0	16.9%
Sickness Rate - Short Term	1.71	1.36	26.0%	1.75	1.89	-7.3%
Days / Shifts Lost - ST	58.0	48.0	20.8%	452.6	453.5	-0.2%

* Long Term Sickness: >28 Calendar Days

** Short-Term Certified Sickness: 8 to 28 Calendar Days

*** Short Term Sickness: <8 Calendar Days

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	APRC/19/9
MEETING	AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	10 MAY 2019
SUBJECT OF REPORT	AUTHORITY POLICY FOR REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) – REVIEW
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Corporate Services
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p><i>(a). that the amendments to the Authority RIPA policy as set out in Section 3 of this report be endorsed;</i></p> <p><i>(b). that a report reviewing the current RIPA policy be submitted to this Committee in twelve months' time; and</i></p> <p><i>(c). that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the report be noted.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>At its meeting on 6 April 2018 the Committee received a report on the Authority's policy and processes in relation to the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). While this Authority has never used, nor envisages a situation where it is ever likely to use, the types of covert techniques governed by RIPA, it is nonetheless required to have appropriate policies and procedures in place given that the legislation currently applies to the Authority.</p> <p>The Authority is also required, under the various codes of practice in place for RIPA, to review its policies and procedures annually and to report on (in anonymised form) any use of RIPA over the last twelve months. This paper sets out the findings of the most recent review.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	<p>There is a requirement to ensure that relevant officers receive appropriate training and that sufficient awareness-raising is undertaken to promote understanding of the processes to be followed to obtain RIPA authorisation. Any costs associated with the above will be met from within existing resources.</p>
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	<p>The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing equalities and human rights legislation.</p>
APPENDICES	<p>Nil (NOTE: a copy of the revised Authority RIPA policy can be a made available on request)</p>

<p>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Report DSFRA/14/21 (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act [RIPA] 2000 – Revised Authority Policy) to the full Authority meeting held on 17 December 2014 (and the Minutes of that meeting). B. Report APRC/15/1 (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act [RIPA] 2000 - Revised Authority Policy) to the Audit & Performance Review Committee meeting held on 6 February 2015 (and the Minutes of that meeting). C. Report APRC/17/18 (Authority Policy for Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 [RIPA]) to the Audit & Performance Review Committee meeting held on 12 September 2017 (and the Minutes of that meeting). D. Report APRC/18/9 (Authority Policy for Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 [RIPA] – outcome of recent inspection) to the Audit & Performance Review Committee meeting held on 26 April 2018 (and the Minutes of that meeting).
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) sets out a regulatory framework for the use by specified public authorities (including combined fire and rescue authorities such as the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority) of covert investigatory techniques which might otherwise infringe legal rights to privacy and respect for family life. RIPA limits authorities to using three, defined covert techniques. Use of any one of these techniques is subject to prior authorisation by an authorising officer or other designated person.
- 1.2. This Authority has no history of using the covert investigatory techniques covered by RIPA and there is no expectation that there will be a need to use them in the future. Instead, it is anticipated that the Authority will invariably be able to gather all the information required for its statutory functions without covert information gathering.
- 1.3. Nonetheless, the Authority is still required to have in place a policy setting out minimum requirements to be complied with in the unlikely event that it is necessary to use RIPA provisions. The policy is intended to provide protection for the Authority, individual officers using RIPA provisions and those subject to or otherwise affected by the process. The terms of the protection are based on necessity, proportionality and the authorisation given in relation to a particular investigation.
- 1.4. Oversight of the Authority's RIPA policy is delegated to this Committee. In doing so, the Committee is required (by virtue of the various Codes of Practice relating to use of RIPA and associated legislation) to keep the policies and procedures under review and to receive an anonymised report on the use of RIPA during the last twelve months. This report now sets out that information.

2. RIPA AUTHORISATIONS SINCE LAST REVIEW

- 2.1. Since the last report to this Committee (at its meeting on 26 April 2018), there has been no use of RIPA.

3. REVIEW OF AUTHORITY POLICY

- 3.1. Since the last review (as reported to the meeting of the Committee in April of last year), the following changes have been made to the Policy:
 - (a). references to the former Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) and the Interception of Communications Commissioners Office (IoCCO) have been replaced by a reference to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner Office (IPCO) which now has oversight of all investigatory powers;
 - (b). references in the Policy to the acquisition of communications data and the Policy Section dealing specifically with this have been annotated to indicate that the RIPA regime for this is currently in transition to a new regime under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. It is anticipated that the new regime will be fully in force and the former RIPA regime repealed by the end of 2019. The annotations indicate that, once the new regime is fully in force, the Policy will be amended to reflect the new processes and that, in the meantime, advice should be sought from the Senior Responsible Officer as to the process to be used prior to seeking to acquire any communications data;

- (c). The hyperlinks in Appendix A to the Policy have been updated to direct to the most recent versions of the various codes of practice for RIPA and the Investigatory Powers Act
- (d). The list of Designated Officers (for the purposes of RIPA oversight, applications and authorisations) as set out at Appendix B of the Policy has been updated to list officers currently in place. The Authority is required to have a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) in relation to the process for the acquisition of communications data. Anyone who is to act as the SPoC has to have undertaken appropriate training accredited by, and obtained a PIN reference from, the Home Office. The PIN reference is used to confirm to a communications service provider (CSP) that the SPoC is lawfully entitled to acquire communications data. The former SPoC has recently left the Service, which is currently in the process of sourcing appropriate training provision for a new SPoC.

3.2. These changes are not considered to be material but rather are consequential to changes to the national regime and legislation rather than material. The Committee is therefore invited to endorse the changes. A full copy of the revised Policy can be made available on request.

4. EXTERNAL INSPECTION OF PROCESSES

4.1. As stated at paragraph 3.1, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office now has responsibility for overseeing the use of investigatory powers by public authorities and in discharging this responsibility can undertake inspections to ascertain that appropriate policies and procedures are in place and are being correctly applied.

4.2. This Authority has twice been inspected by the (former) Office of the Surveillance Commissioner – once in early 2015 (involving a physical visit) and a “light touch” inspection (involving submission of a completed questionnaire and a subsequent telephone conversation for clarification purposes) towards the end of 2017. Recommendations stemming from both inspections were subsequently addressed by revisions to the Authority's RIPA policy (Minutes *APRC/14 and *APRC/33 of the meetings of this Committee held on 12 September 2017 and 26 April 2018, respectively, refer). Additionally, the “light touch” inspection commented on the need for appropriate training for all officers involved in the RIPA process. Substantive training was delivered by an external provider in July 2018 and it is intended that proportionate, “light touch” refresher training (utilising provided training materials) will be undertaken later this year.

4.3. Both previous inspections commented specifically that the Authority had never had recourse to use RIPA. This is not uncommon amongst fire and rescue authorities and consequently the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has written to the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) requesting that fire and rescue services be removed from the list of public bodies to which the RIPA powers apply. In responding to the NFCC, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner (the Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Fulford) advises that, while changes to the RIPA schedule lies with the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT), the IPCO will suspend all inspections of fire and rescue authorities pending a decision by OSCT. Chief Fire Officers have also been asked, however, to inform the IPCO if they commence using RIPA powers to enable the IPCO to review its need to inspect fire and rescue services.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. While the Authority has never had recourse to use the type of covert surveillance techniques regulated by RIPA and does not envisage any situation where this would be necessary, it nonetheless takes seriously its commitment to ensuring that, should this ever be necessary, the activities are undertaken in legally compliant manner.
- 5.2. This commitment of the Authority has been recognised in reports from the former Office of the Surveillance Commissioners following previous inspections. This report now sets out amendments to the Authority's RIPA policy and procedures which in the main are as a consequence of changes either in legislation or responsibility for national oversight of investigatory powers. Subject to incorporation of these amendments, it is considered that the Authority's RIPA policy and procedures are robust and will ensure that the Authority is fully compliant with RIPA requirements should it ever prove necessary to employ covert surveillance techniques.
- 5.3. On this basis, the Committee is asked to:
- endorse the changes to the RIPA policy as set out in Section 3 of this report;
 - review the policy in twelve months' time; and
 - otherwise note the contents of this report.

MIKE PEARSON
Director of Corporate Services

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