

AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

9 November 2018

Present:-

Councillors Napper (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Bowyer, Clayton, Coles (vice Healey), Mathews, Peart (vice Saywell) and Wheeler.

Apologies:-

Councillor Healey MBE

* **APRC/8** Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2018 be signed as a correct record, subject to amendment under Minute *APRC/1 to change the word “Mionate” to “Minute” and “te” to “the”.

* **APRC/9** External Audit Update

Aditi Chandramouli was introduced to the Committee as the new Engagement Manager from Grant Thornton.

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 October 2018). The report covered the following matters, amongst others:

- The progress made to date with the financial statements audit, the value for money conclusion and the Annual Audit Letter (Minute *APRC/4 below refers);
- A fire sector update including an up to date summary of emerging national issues together with insights from the local authority sector and reports of interests;
- The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) response to the Hackitt Review into the Grenfell Tower fire;
- a number of recent CIPFA publications including “the guide to local government finance” 2017 edition;
- a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation on proposed changes to the prudential framework of capital finance.

* **APRC/10** Annual Audit Letter

The Committee received for information the Authority’s Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2018 as submitted by the Authority’s external auditor, Grant Thornton.

Peter Barber, representing Grant Thornton, drew attention to the work that had been undertaken with the Authority during the year, including the Statement of Accounts and the Value for Money conclusion, both of which had received an unqualified opinion.

* **APRC/11 Audit & Review Update: Quarter 2**

The Committee received for information a report (APRC/18/18) that provided an update on the progress made to date against the approved 2018-19 Internal Audit Plan and which also provided an update on the additional audit work undertaken.

The report also provided assurance statements for the audits completed to date and recorded the progress against the approved Internal Audit Plan. Additionally this included an overview of key assurance activities completed by other teams who contributed to the audit plan, such as Information Assurance, Operational Assurance, and Safety Assurance. The report set out an overview of the assurance tracking process and the current high priority recommendations that remain as 'open' on the assurance tracker. It was noted that, over the last 12 months, a 67% decrease had been seen in overdue recommendations with no update, to 43 (132) reported in September 2018).

* **APRC/12 Corporate Risk Register**

The Committee received for information a report (APRC/18/xx) that set out information on the Service corporate risk register, captured and described the Authority's most significant risks, with a focus on cross-cutting risks and major projects. The report also set out the new risks that had been identified, namely:

- CR041 - Outstanding policies may adversely impact on safe systems of work and reduce existing compliance standards.
- CR042 Restrictive business rules for minimum operational crewing levels impacts
- CR043 ICT business continuity plans that support organisational restoration should be tested regularly for plan adequacy.

* **APRC/13 Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service Performance report: April to September 2018**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (APRC/18/20) that set out the Service's performance for the period of April 2017 to September 2018 with a focus on quarter 2 of 2018-19. The report highlighted the new format for the performance information which set out a measure status of good performance, monitor performance' or negative exception. This was established through an assessment of the different types of analysis, for example, performance versus the previous year, performance versus the previous quarter and trends and performance against normal variation to give a more rounded picture and which directed focus more effectively on emerging issues. Where a measure was reported as an exception, a separate report would be provided.

Three of the eight measures were showing positive performance whilst three measures were showing negative performance with two requiring monitoring. In terms of the measures showing negative performance, the following was noted:

Positive performance:

- Fire-related injuries where people live had seen a reduction in both the reporting quarter (-15.4%) and year-to-date figures (-12.5%);
- Fires where people live had seen a reduction in incidents in both the reporting quarter (-9.5%) and year-to date (-12.3%);

- Emergency response standards for fires where people live were showing improvement compared to previous year for the reporting quarter and only a slight deterioration in year-to-date performance. The long-term trend is also positive.

Monitoring Performance:

- Fire-related injuries where people work, visit and in vehicles was showing variable performance with the reporting quarter showing no change from previous year and year-to-date showing a slight improvement. Both three and five-year trends are upward. The number of injuries recorded were low and as such small variations within the data could affect measurement significantly.
- Emergency response standards for road traffic collisions was showing variable performance and should be monitored. There has been a slight decline in performance during Quarter 2 of 2018/19 and year-to-date performance was also slightly worse than previous year. However, three and five-year trends were positive.

Negative Performance

- There had been five fire-related deaths between April and September 2018; three due to fires where people live, one due to a vehicle fire and one due to an out of control bonfire. Where a death unfortunately had occurred the related measures will be reported as exceptions;
- Fires where people work, visit and in vehicles had increased for both the reporting quarter and year-to date. The rolling three-year trend is upward, however, the five-year trend was down. Analysis indicated that the increase was likely to be linked to the sustained period of dry hot weather experienced over the summer months.

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

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