

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE



Held on Thursday 18 March 2010

Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS

Those present: Councillor John Lenton (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Iain McCracken (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mohammed Rasib (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Raja Zarait (Member, Fire Authority)

In Attendance: Conor Byrne (Senior Accountant)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Dan Maycock (RSM Tenon) (*part meeting*)
Paul Jones (Station Manager, Performance Review)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)

Action

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Chris Bowring and Councillor Alan Ward.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman, Councillor Iain McCracken, declared a Personal non Prejudicial interest as a Bracknell Forest Borough Council Councillor in respect to Agenda Item 7 (New Internal Audit Contract) and Agenda Item 14 (New Internal Audit Contract - Appendix). There were no further declarations of interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct. There were no declarations of interest received from Officers.

29. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2009

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Performance Review Committee meeting held on 17 December 2009 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

30. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS PROPERLY REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR DECISION

Resolved:

- a) That it be Noted that no matters had been properly referred to the Committee for decision.

31. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee was advised of the progress with the internal Audit Plan for 2009/10.

The Authority Treasurer introduced Dan Maycock from RSM Tenon who took Members through the presented report. He referred specifically to the final reports issued, the key findings from the internal audit work, the work in progress or planned, the liaison with Management and external audit, and the changes to the Audit Plan.

In response to Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound's question regarding the risk assessments carried out for home workers, Dan Maycock confirmed that this recommendation had been identified as there was no central record kept as to who had completed the necessary risk assessments.

In response to the Chairman's questions regarding the current position in respect to those auditable areas which were identified as either work in progress or yet to start, Dan Maycock confirmed the following:

- i) That the Management response to the IT Systems Review audit was currently being finalised and would be circulated on 19 March 2010.
- ii) That the Management's response to the Community Prevention and Protection audit was still awaited, however this was expected very shortly.
- iii) That the Stock Management and the Risk Management audits were currently undergoing the quality assurance process, and that it was hoped that these audits would be with Management shortly.
- iv) That dates for all the auditable areas for the remainder of the year had now been agreed, as per Appendix A of the presented report, with the exception of the Anti Fraud Arrangements as the draft scope was still awaited from the Fraud Team.

Dan Maycock agreed to the Chairman's request that target dates should be included within future reports relating to work in progress or yet to commence.

In response to the Chairman regarding why some reviews were no longer to be undertaken as part of the internal audit programme for 2009/10, the following reasons were provided by Dan Maycock, the Authority Treasurer and the Senior Accountant:

- Strategic Planning review - not included as the Strategic Plan was being revisited.
- Value for Money review - not included as it was difficult to identify a specific audit for this.
- Contract Management Appliances - not included at the current time due to time pressures on personnel's time, however this would be revisited in due course.

The Chairman requested that, within future reports, the reasons why reviews were not to be undertaken should be included to enable Members to properly assess the current situation.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

32. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference, and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer noted the recommended amendments made by the Members.

The Committee accepted that its Work Programme should be determined by the

**RSM
Tenon**

**RSM
Tenon**

Committee itself, however the Internal Auditor's recommendation that the Committee should consider increasing the time it dedicates to reviewing the Risk Register and assurances over the effectiveness of controls put in place to mitigate risks identified was Noted.

Resolved:

- a) That no significant changes to the scope of the Terms of Reference should be considered at the current time as the Committee had only been existence for less than a year, but that the Terms of Reference be periodically revisited and reviewed.
- b) That, as the Chairman had a number of further amendments to those already advised relating to the inference of some terminology, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should liaise with the Chairman outside of the meeting, and that a revised draft Terms of Reference be presented at the next meeting for further consideration, for subsequent reporting to the Management Committee for consideration and ratification, and presentation to the Fire Authority for approval.

Forward Plan
(annually /
bi-annually
as required)

**CMO /
Chairman**

CMO
Agenda
24.05.10

Dan Maycock (RSM Tenon) retired from the meeting.

33. NEW INTERNAL AUDIT CONTRACT

The Committee considered the appointment of new internal Auditors to the Authority.

Resolved:

- a) That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for this Agenda item, to enable the Exempt Appendix, as at Agenda item 14, to also be taken into consideration, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and was exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Agenda Item 14 (New Internal Audit Contract - Appendix) was taken as part of the considerations of this item.

The Authority Treasurer believed that, should the preferred new Internal Auditors be appointed, this should, in his opinion, realise an overall audit performance improvement.

Resolved:

- a) That the report, and confidential Appendix, be Noted.
- b) That the firm highlighted in red in the Exempt Appendix be recommended to the Management Committee for appointment as the Authority's internal Auditors.

The meeting then resumed in Part I.

34. STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - CAPITAL MONITORING REPORTS

The Committee was provided with the opportunity to view the Capital Monitoring reports presented to the Strategic Asset Management Committee (SAMC).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer was pleased to note that the Capital Programme

was now more focussed and timely, and that this was as a result of the work conducted by Officers and the Strategic Asset Management Committee.

Resolved:

- a) That the Capital Monitoring reports presented to SAMC be Noted.
- b) That the Strategic Asset Management Committee capital monitoring reports be viewed bi-annually by the Committee.

Standing
Agenda item
(Mar / Sept)

35. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee was provided with an overview and review of performance against an independently selected performance indicator, namely BV206i and ii (Deliberate Fires).

The Station Manager (Performance Review) confirmed that once a full year's detailed geographical data regarding the number of property and car fires had been captured, identified hot spot areas could then be appropriately targeted. He referred to some of the community safety and local initiatives, for example, the Void Buildings Project, the Arson Reduction Partnership work and the work of the crews on the ground, that were underpinning the improvements being made and the reductions being realised in relation to deliberate fires. The Chairman felt that this was a 'good news' story, and the Station Manager felt that once the full year's data was known that this would then be a good time to report this.

The Station Manager (Performance Review) then gave a visual presentation of the latest data within the Best Value Scorecards for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Brigade Operations, and Local Performance Indicators (*copy available from the Committee Manager*), and he referred specifically to the initiatives and work being conducted, including the Call Challenge and Hoax Calls initiatives, and to the work with Thames Valley Police which were all realising improvements to the respective measures.

In response to the Chairman, the Station Manager (Performance Review) confirmed that action plans were in place for those Scorecards which were currently reporting as 'red'.

In response to Councillor John Lenton regarding how often tactical plans were updated, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this was subject to the nature of the risk, and that updates were done on a grading scale and were dependent on the nature of the property.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.
- b) That the Group Manager (Performance Review) (GM (PR)) should, at a future meeting, provide an overview and review of performance against LP14a (% of Home Fire Risk Assessments done in risk areas (Community Safety)) and LP15 (% of staff with Performance Development Interview (PDI) within last six months (Brigade)).
- c) That the Best Value Scorecards be presented as a hard copy within the standing Quarterly Performance Reports.

GM (PR)
(future
reporting)

GM (PR)

36. PROCUREMENT DOCTOR PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee was advised of the progress made against the Procurement Doctor Report.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer agreed to the Chairman's request that future reports should include a table at the end of the report detailing any outstanding issues still to be addressed in response to the Procurement Doctor's recommendations.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer conveyed his thanks to the Fire Authority for approving the budget bid for the recruitment of Procurement Officer, the postholder having now been in post since September 2009. He was pleased to report that the work being undertaken by the postholder was realising improvements within procurement.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

37. AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer invited Members to consider what inclusions they would wish to have in the Committee's annual report to the Fire Authority.

The Chairman requested that Members submit their respective considerations to either the Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO) or the Committee Manager (CM) by a date to be advised post meeting by the Committee Manager, to enable the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to prepare a draft report for consideration and approval at the next meeting.

38. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Monday 24 May 2010 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

39. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved:

- a) That, as Agenda Item 14 (New Internal Audit Contract - Appendix) had been taken at Agenda Item 7 (New Internal Audit Contract) (*Minute reference 33 refers*), the public did not need to be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and was exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

40. NEW INTERNAL AUDIT CONTRACT - APPENDIX

This item was taken at Agenda Item 7 (New Internal Audit Contract).

Councillor John Lenton declared a Personal non Prejudicial interest as his son is a Senior Audit Manager employed by one of the firms who tendered for the new internal audit contract.

ACFO

Members

CM / CMO

Agenda
24.05.10