

At a meeting of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE held at Hampshire Fire and
Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 5 April, 2013

PRESENT:

Councillors: R. McIntosh (Chair), C. Carter, D. Harrison, T. Knight, C. McEwing, P. Smith and R. Smith.

35 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Darragh, L. Fairhurst, J. Frankum and M. Tucker.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

No interests were declared under this item.

37 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The following corrections were clarified in the Minutes:

Minute 29 – Recommendation b) “agreed that dispensation *should be granted...*”

Minute 31 – “Members were *taken* through....”

Minute 32 – “Recommendation c) 1. failure to *respond* effectively....”

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 November 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no formal announcements at the meeting

39 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations received for this meeting.

40 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2012/13

The Committee considered a report from the Treasurer to the Authority (Item 6 in the Minute Book), regarding the 2012/13 Audit Plan. It was confirmed that there were very few outstanding actions and none were overdue. Since the report had been published, the various audits had

progressed and 88% of the plan had been delivered.

Members were informed that the audit relating to taxation in the report (Page 2 of the appendix) related to benefits in kind rather than direct salary payments. This would not therefore be affected by the new requirements to supply real time information about salary payments to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

It was noted that there were some gaps in the table showing the progress of audits. This was because these audits were planned for quarter 4 and so some of the actions had not yet taken place.

It was requested that a report be presented at the following meeting regarding the Standards & Governance Committee's relationship and responsibilities to 3SFire Limited.

RESOLVED:

The Standards and Governance Committee noted the progress of internal audit work for the period ending 28 February 2013.

41 **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 7 in the Minute Book), which provided an overview on the implementation of actions arising from internal audits.

Members were taken through the appendix to the report. It was highlighted that on Page 3, investigation reports were being completed but the Authority felt it was important that the officers carrying them out had further training to support them in their roles. On Page 4 it was confirmed that benefits in kind for all vehicles would be declared for the 2012/13 tax year where they existed. .

It was noted that the Project Management Office was developing processes to review and evaluate completed projects. Larger projects and those that related to Corporate Objectives were also reviewed by the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee, but all were reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT) regardless of their size or impact.

Officers were thanked for their work on developing the glossary of terms, which Members agreed was very helpful and informative.

RESOLVED:

The Standards and Governance Committee approved the audit action reports, and progress made towards the implementation of recommendations.

42 **STRATEGIC INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2013/14 TO 2015/16**

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer (Item 8 in the Minute Book), which provided an overview of the Strategic Internal Audit Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

Members were taken through the report and appendix.

RESOLVED:

The Standards and Governance Committee endorsed the Internal Audit Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16.

43 HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2012/13

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 9 in the Minute Book), regarding the External Audit Plan for 2012/13.

Sections 2 and 3 of the appendix were highlighted and it was confirmed that no significant risks had been identified. It was also noted that there were no significant risks found regarding Value for Money (VfM). Page 12 of the plan set out the proposed fees for 2012/13 which were lower than the previous year.

RESOLVED:

The Standards and Governance Committee accepted the External Audit Plan for 2012/13.

44 JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FLEET MAINTENANCE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 10 in the Minute Book), regarding joint working arrangements for fleet maintenance.

It was confirmed that a Joint Management Board would handle the integration of the two maintenance functions and consider future budgets and the long term plans for joint working. Members queried where the benefits lay in the arrangement when it involved further costs in staff and resources. The costs shown were in relation to the implementation of joint working. The joint working meant that operating overheads currently covered solely by HFRS would be shared, which would provide a large saving to the Authority and outweigh the costs of any additional staff.

RESOLVED:

The Standards and Governance Committee noted the governance arrangements detailed in the report.

45 LOCALISM ACT – COLLABORATION BETWEEN HAMPSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Committee considered a report from the Clerk (Item 11), which updated Members on progress with exploring the options for a pan-Hampshire Members' Code of Conduct.

Following requests from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Association (HLOWLA), research and consultation was agreed to look at introducing an over-arching Code of Conduct for all local authorities. Members were presented with four Options (1, 2, 3a and 3b) as detailed in pages 3-5 of the report. It was agreed that Option 2 provided a suitable balance and that Option 3b would be very difficult to manage and not appropriate. The Committee agreed that it was important for the Code of Conduct to be clear, concise and easy to understand and interpret.

It was confirmed that the option would be used in consultation going forward with local authorities, including Hampshire Association of Local Councils which was very supportive of the introduction of the Code.

With regards to the recruitment of an Independent Person, it was agreed that a selection panel and suitable dates for interview would be established after the elections on the 2 May 2013, ahead of the June 2013 Full Authority meeting.

RESOLVED

The Standards and Governance Committee:

- a) Considered and commented on the draft report, and authorised the Clerk to finalise it, in consultation with the Chairman of the Standards & Governance Committee, for submission to HLOWLA;
- b) Agreed that Option 2 was the most favourable; and
- c) Agreed to recommence the process for the recruitment of an Independent Person following the County Council elections on the 2 May 2013, for recommendation to the Full Authority meeting in June 2013.

At the end of the meeting, the Chairman thanked Officers and Members for their hard work and support to the Standards & Governance Committee.