

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Performance Management Committee
Held in the Oak Room, Headquarters, Shrewsbury
On Thursday, 8 December 2016 at 2.00 pm**

**Present
Members**

Councillors Adams, Barnes, Hosken, Hurst-Knight, Jones, Mellings and Pinter

Officers

Rod Hammerton	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Louise McKenzie	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	ACFO
James Walton	Treasurer	
Joanne Coadey	Head of Finance	HoF
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO

For agenda items 13 to 16

John Harrison	Temporary Area Manager Operational Training and Development	AMOTD
Shaun Baker	Assistant Group Commander, Shropshire Rural Performance Group	AGCSR
Ian Leigh	Protection Manager	PM

External Bodies

Mr McLarnon	Grant Thornton, External Audit
Mr Chadderton	Audit Services, Shropshire Council
Deborah Moseley	Democratic and Scrutiny Services, Telford & Wrekin Council

1 Apologies for Absence

Mr Stocks, Grant Thornton, External Audit and Ms Pilawski, Audit Services, Shropshire Council.

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Councillors Barnes and Mellings declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items 14 and 16 as members of the Board of Directors of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd.

Councillor Mellings had been granted a dispensation by the Fire Authority to take part in the discussion of, and voting on, certain matters, which relate to Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. On this occasion, the reports being considered detailed the performance of Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services and were for information purposes only. It was, therefore, deemed appropriate for Councillor Mellings to participate in the discussion of these items.

3 Minutes

Resolved that the Committee agree the minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee meeting, held on 15 September 2016, and that the Chair sign them as a correct record.

4 Public Questions

None

5 Audit and Performance Management Committee Work Plan 2016/17

This report put forward a 2017/18 Work Plan for the Audit and Performance Management Committee for consideration and approval by Members. The report also reviewed implementation of the activities listed in last year's Work Plan.

Resolved that the Committee approve the Audit and Performance Management Committee Work Plan 2017/18, attached as an appendix to the report, without amendment.

6 External Audit

6a Annual Audit Letter

The Committee received the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter, which summarised the key findings of the work carried out for the year ended 31 March 2016.

Mr McLarnon explained that the Annual Audit Letter was a public facing document that was a reiteration of the Audit Findings Report, which the Committee had received at their last meeting.

Mr McLarnon thanked the HoF and the Finance Team for their work on the 2015/16 Audit.

Resolved that the Committee note the Annual Audit Letter for the Year Ended 31 March 2016.

6b Update for Year Ended 31 March 2017

This paper reported on Grant Thornton's progress in delivering their responsibilities as external auditors. The paper also included a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to the Fire Authority.

Mr McLarnon talked through the progress made to date and informed the Committee that the Audit Team had met with Finance officers and agreed a timeline for the earlier closedown of accounts that is planned for the 2016/17 Audit.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

7 Early Closedown of Accounts

This report informed the Committee of the changes in the timetable for preparing and approving the Statement of Accounts.

The HOF explained that an early closedown would be piloted next year to ensure that everything is in place for the following year when the new deadlines take effect. The intention is to complete the Audit in August but to leave the Audit and Performance Management Committee where it usually is, i.e. in September 2017.

The HoF explained that work was being undertaken to establish whether the Statement of Accounts needed to be a more public facing document. Members asked if the Service received queries regarding information on accounts. The HoF explained that there is a formally advertised public inspection period for the Statement of Accounts. There tends to be no queries from this advert but the Service does receive Freedom of Information requests, where the response refers to the Statement of Accounts.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report.

8 Confirmation of Arrangements for Appointment of External Auditors

Following a report to this Committee in September 2016 regarding the appointment of external auditors from 1 April 2018, this report confirmed Public Sector Auditor Appointments Ltd (PSAA) as a sector led body. The Committee was asked to formally opt into PSAA for the future appointment of external auditors.

Resolved that the Committee agree to recommend that the Fire Authority formally opt in to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd as a sector led body.

9 Internal Audit Plan from 2017/18

This report recommended that the Fire Authority approve the programme of audit work for the financial year 2017/18 as set out in the report.

The Committee queried if six days was still sufficient for the ICT Audit. Mr Chadderton confirmed that it was with five days scheduled for the audit plus one day for specific follow up issues.

Resolved that the Committee agree to recommend that the Fire Authority approve the audit plan for 2017/18, as set out in the report.

10 Corporate Risk Management Summary

This report was the latest of regular risk summary reports to the Audit and Performance Management Committee.

The ACFO presented the report and informed the Committee that a direction of travel column, based on officer assessment had been included as requested at the last meeting. The Committee agreed that this was an excellent solution to Members request. Officers agreed to provide a PDF version of the Corporate Risk Register containing all action history for the next Committee meeting. Members will then discuss and decide upon what level of information they require for subsequent meetings.

In response to Members' questions, Officers confirmed that the IT audit, as detailed on page 9 of the appendix, has been completed and the results of this are awaited. With regard to the Business Continuity testing, officers confirmed that Fire Control resilience testing had been undertaken this year and that further testing is required.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report

11 Annual Governance Statement 2016/17

This report summarised the progress made to date against the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) Improvement Plan 2016/17.

Resolved that the Committee note the progress made against each of the improvements contained in the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan 2016/17.

12 Risk Management Group Internal Audit Progress Monitoring Report

This report provided an update on the monitoring of recommendations made by Internal Audit, which is undertaken by the Risk Management Group. It specifically covered details on the progress made against outstanding recommendations.

Resolved that the Committee note

- a) the progress made against the outstanding recommendations; and
- b) that the Risk Management Group will continue to monitor progress against all recommendations, reporting to this Committee on a regular basis.

The Committee took a short break at this point (2.35 pm) and reconvened at 2.40 pm

13 Performance Monitoring

13a Service Targets April to November 2016

This report presented a summary of the Service's performance from April to November 2016.

The ACFO presented this report and explained that it showed slightly different figures to those in the presentation at item 13b due to the data for this report being produced at a later date. The ACFO also advised that whilst indicator 3b was currently showing 11, this was expected to increase to 17 once reports have been received relating to a road traffic collision involving Newport.

In response to a request from the Committee, the CFO undertook to circulate further detail on recent deliberate agricultural fires to Committee members.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

13b Presentation on Service Targets

As agreed at the July 2016 meeting of the Committee, the PM gave a presentation on the following 2016/17 Service Targets:

All accidental fires will be reduced to not more than 519 during 2016/17

Accidental dwelling fires to be reduced to not more than 224 during 2016/17

Resolved that the Committee note the presentation.

13c Wholetime and Retained Duty System Performance Monitoring July to September 2016

This report provided information regarding the ongoing performance and management in terms of the availability of wholetime and Retained Duty System (RDS) appliances in Shropshire.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report.

14 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. Performance Reporting

This report provided information on the performance of the Fire Authority controlled company, Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd.

Resolved that the Committee note the report.

15 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

16 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services Ltd. Performance Update (Paragraph 3)

The Committee received the appendix to report 14, which contained exempt information.

Resolved that the Committee note the exempt appendix to report 14.

The meeting closed at 3.05 pm

Chair

Date _____