

Process for Approval of the Statement of Accounts

Report of the Treasurer

For further information about this report please contact Rachel Musson, Treasurer on 01743 252007, or Joanne Coadey, Head of Finance, on 01743 260215.

1 Purpose of Report

This report details the review carried out by the Audit and Performance Management Committee of the approval process for the Statement of Accounts, and makes recommendations for its amendment.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the review of the current process for approval of the Statement of Accounts, and
- b) Consider reinstatement of delegation to the Audit and Performance Management Committee for the approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2011/12 and subsequent years.

3 Background

Following changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, the timetable for approving the Fire Authority's Statement of Accounts was updated in April 2011.

At the request of its Members a report was subsequently taken to the Audit and Performance Management Committee in November 2011, when the process for approving the Statement for 2010/11 was reviewed.

4 Review of 2010/11 Approval Timetable

The process is summarised as follows:

June 2011	The Fire Authority was updated on the balance of the General Fund, and virements to reserves were approved.
Early Sept 11	The audited Statement of Accounts was presented to the Audit and Performance Management Committee for review. The Audit Commission presented the Annual Governance Report and the Statement of Audit Progress. The Letter of Representation was signed by 'those charged with governance'.
Late Sept 11	The Fire Authority considered and approved the Statement. The Fire Authority confirmed to the Audit Commission that there were no changes to the Letter of Representation.

At the November meeting of the Audit and Performance Management Committee, it was felt that the in-depth review and approval of the Statement was better placed with the Committee, as 'those charged with governance'.

Subsequent discussions with the Treasurer and the Authority's Audit Manager reinforced this view, with the Audit Commission stating that as the Audit and Performance Management Committee receives the Statement for review and challenge, its members are fulfilling their role as 'those charged with governance'. The Letter of Representation would be signed at the same time the Statement was approved, which would ensure that the Letter was reflective of the position at the date of approval.

5 Recommendations for Changes to the Timetable

As a result of the review of the approval of the Statement of Accounts, it is therefore recommended that delegation for approval of the 2011/12 Statement of Accounts and beyond is reinstated to the Audit and Performance Management Committee, and that the Committee approve the Statement for 2011/12 at its meeting in September 2012.

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report other than those discussed within the report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications other than those outlined in the report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and have decided that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.