

Constitution, Meeting Dates and Training

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260225 or Sharon Lloyd, Corporate Services Manager, on 01743 260210.

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to bring the latest version of the Committee's constitution to the notice of its Members. The report also advises of the November 2009 meeting date and requests agreement to meeting dates for 2010. Finally, the report brings Members up to date on training issues and requests them to consider what should be the topic of the next training session.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) Note the constitution of the Audit and Performance Management Committee (attached at Appendix A);
- b) Agree the Committee's 2010 meeting dates, set out at section 4; and
- c) Note the latest position with regard to training and decide which topic should be the subject of the next training session.

3 Audit and Performance Management Committee Constitution

Following the elections to Shropshire Council and the Council meeting in June a significant number of new Members has been appointed to the Fire Authority, who have not previously been involved in its work or that of its committees. Furthermore, at its Annual Meeting in July the Fire Authority reviewed the constitution of each of its committees, which resulted in some changes to the terms of reference.

Under the circumstances it is considered good practice for each of the committees to revisit its constitution at their first meeting after the Fire Authority Annual Meeting to ensure that all Members of the committee are familiar with the latest terms of reference.

The constitution of the Audit and Performance Management Committee, updated to include the amendments agreed by the Fire Authority at the Annual meeting, is attached at Appendix A. For ease of reference for previous Members of the Committee the additions made at that time are shown in bold italic.

The Committee will be given the opportunity to review and, if necessary, propose amendments to its terms of reference at its meeting prior to the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority in July 2010.

4 Committee Meeting Dates

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Thursday, 26 November. Members have recently agreed that all meetings will commence at 2.00 pm, although it may be necessary to review this in due course.

Members are asked to agree the following proposed meeting dates for 2010:

18 February 2010
13 May 2010
9 September 2010
25 November 2010

5 Training Issues

The Committee has been keen to undertake training to fulfil its role and manage changing circumstances. It also hopes to share formal training with other Members of the Fire Authority, in particular arranging training sessions before meetings of the full Authority.

To focus training Members agreed to complete the questionnaire (attached at Appendix B). Five Members completed the form and their responses are shown. No major issues stand out, and there seems to be a wide spread of expertise.

The main outstanding topics reported to the March meeting of the Committee are:

- Role of IT audit
- Contract Rules
- Risk Management
- Financial Rules
- Treasury Management
- Protection and Quality of Data

In April, the Fire Authority tasked this Committee with reviewing our Treasury Management Practices. This will be undertaken once Shropshire Council, (our Treasury Management Provider) has reviewed its Treasury Management policies, and the Fire Authority has aligned its policies with theirs. This is expected to be done later in the year after the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has issued its revised Treasury Management Code in response to the Icelandic bank collapses.

Members are asked for their views with regard to deciding which topic should be the subject of the next training session.

Finally, to support training, Committee Members were provided with copies of the CIPFA Handbook on Audit Committees, and these will be circulated at the meeting for new Members.

6 Information Items

In order to streamline the agendas of the Fire Authority and its committees officers intend to reduce the number of information items, which are currently included. The intention is to post such items on a dedicated Member web page and send an e-mail alert to Members to advise that a particular item has been posted. Each item will remain on the web page for a specified period and then removed. A further alert will be sent one week prior to advise of the item's removal.

7 Financial Implications

The move to reduce the number of information items on agendas will lead to efficiency savings in paper, photocopying and postage costs and in staff time.

There may be some cost implications relating to the provision of training for Members but these are as yet unknown.

8 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Bringing the latest version of the Committee's constitution to the notice of its Members is not a legal requirement but represents good practice.

9 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 specifically from this report. An Initial Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed.

10 Appendices

Appendix A – Audit and Performance Management Committee Constitution
Appendix B – Audit Committee Members Skills Assessment

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

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| Balanced Score Card | | Integrated Risk Management Planning | |
| Business Continuity Planning | | Legal | * |
| Capacity | | Member Involvement | * |
| Civil Contingencies Act | | National Framework | |
| Comprehensive Performance Assessment | | Operational Assurance | |
| Efficiency Savings | * | Retained | |
| Environmental | | Risk and Insurance | |
| Financial | * | Staff | |
| Fire Control/Fire Link | | Strategic Planning | |
| Information Communications and Technology | * | West Midlands Regional Management Board | |
| Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information | | Equality Impact Assessment | * |