

Risk Management Group Internal Audit Progress Monitoring Report

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with a summary of the work, undertaken by the Risk Management Group, into the monitoring of the recommendations that have been made in the various audit reports produced by Internal Audit. It gives specific details about the progress made against the outstanding recommendations, referenced in the Internal Audit 2008/09 Summary Audit Report (agenda item 10),

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- a) Note the progress that has been made against the outstanding recommendations noted in the Internal Audit 2008/09 Summary Audit Report (agenda item 10); and
- b) Note that the Risk Management Group will continue to monitor progress against all recommendations, reporting progress to this Committee on a regular basis.

3 Background

In March 2008, the Committee agreed a process for dealing with Internal Audit recommendations, which ensured that all matters were dealt with effectively.

Recommendations are classified as being one of the following:

- Fundamental - Immediate action is required to address major control weaknesses that could lead to material loss
- Significant - Action needed to address a substantial control weakness where systems might be working but errors may go undetected
- Requires Attention - Action needed to improve existing controls or improve efficiencies.

The Committee agreed it would consider directly any “fundamental” recommendations. “Significant” and “Requiring Attention” recommendations are considered initially by the Risk Management Group (the Group) and any delays or failures in implementing recommendations would be brought to the Committee. This process has been used by the Group since it was initially agreed by this Committee. Members should note that there have been no ‘Fundamental’ recommendations since this monitoring process was implemented.

4 Internal Audit Summary Report

Internal Audit have provided Members with a statement relating to the level of assurance they are able to give about the measures, which the Service has in place to control its significant risks (see agenda item 10). This comment is based on the findings from their audits and the response officers have made to their recommendations for improvement over the period April 2008 to March 2009.

Internal Audit stated the following in that report:

‘On the basis of the responses and assurances given by Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service’s management to last year’s audit recommendations and the audit findings and initial management responses to the current year’s audit work, a high level of assurance can be given that the overall control arrangements of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service are considered satisfactory in the areas examined.’

Internal Audit have taken account of the Service’s recommendations monitoring process, co-ordinated by the Group, in making this statement.

A recent meeting, between the Group and Internal Audit, has identified further improvements to our joint monitoring processes. As well as giving both parties an opportunity to ensure we are fully aware of each others’ processes, significant benefit should come from the creation of a shared database, which lists all of the recommendations that have been made by Internal Audit going back to 2005/06. This will help further to improve communication between the Group and Internal Audit into the future.

5 Outstanding Recommendations

Internal Audit's 2008/09 Summary Audit Report gave some details about a number of recommendations from their 2005 and 2006 audits of the Service that, at the time of their last inspection of those areas, had not been fully implemented. Discussions at the recent meeting, between the Group and Internal Audit, clarified how some of these recommendations had been missed off subsequent year's follow-up inspections. This resulted in their not being included in the Group's monitoring process, when it was initially set up in 2008. At its last meeting, the Group focussed attention on seeking comment from all relevant officers about the progress that has been made against these 'outstanding' recommendations. A summary of the responses, obtained from officers, is provided for Members' information in the appendix to this report. The Group will continue to monitor these, and all other recommendations, with progress being reported to this Committee, as appropriate.

6 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

This report simply reports progress against various recommendations made by Internal Audit and therefore has no direct impact on people. It has been assessed against the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 5 Part 2) and this has shown 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 Appendix

Progress against 'outstanding' recommendations

10 Background Papers

Audit and Performance Management Committee

10 September 2009, Report 10 – Internal Audit 2008/09 Summary Audit 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.

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 (attached)	*