

Report of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee meeting held on 18th January 2007

Present: Councillors: B Boddington, G Heathcock, D R Pegram, M Smith (substituting for Councillor G Murphy)

1. PWC ANNUAL AUDIT 2005/06 - UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee has noted a report from the Treasurer of the Authority on progress being made with implementing recommendations made by PricewaterhouseCoopers(PWC), the Authority's external auditors, as part of the Annual Audit Letter and Report to Management on its review of the financial aspects of corporate governance.

As at the end of September 2006, there were 34 recommendations to be completed. To date 16 of these have been completed and significant progress has been made with 16 recommendations. The Authority agreed previously that no further action was required on the remaining 2 recommendations as these had already been addressed.

A number of the outstanding recommendations will be addressed through the development of a suite of 23 new ICT security policies with a view to obtaining ISO27001 accreditation. The development of these policies has been prioritized and 11 have been introduced with the remaining policies to be introduced shortly. It was estimated that it will take to June 2008 to implement these policies and to arrange staff training. The Committee agreed that a report on progress be made to the Committee in November 2007.

The Committee was also advised of progress with the procurement of the Authority's internal auditor. 7 tenders had been received from potential providers and 3 had been shortlisted for interview on 26th January 2007.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF 2005/06 INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS - UPDATE

The Committee has noted a report from the Treasurer of the Authority on the implementation of recommendations made by Internal Audit.

Members noted that as at September 2006, 27 of the 49 recommendations had been fully implemented with progress being made against a further 17. To date, 39 recommendations had been fully implemented and no progress had been made on 2 of the recommendations. These related to the arrangements for the recording

of starters and leavers and the reconciliation of £500 in the Accounts which was thought to be due to the treatment of VAT. The Committee noted the Business Development Unit had been established which would progress the recommendation on starters and leavers by May 2007.

3. REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Committee has received a report from the Head of Finance and Corporate Development on the Authority's revised Strategic Risk Register.

The role of the Policy and Finance Committee is to review the risk register to ensure that all perceived strategic risks were included and addressed correctly. The Scrutiny and Performance Committee was asked to check progress against the identified tasks. In undertaking this role, the Committee agreed that more detail within the Register was required on the actions required and the progress being made against them, including timescales. The Head of Finance and Corporate Development agreed that this would be addressed as part of the review of the format of the Register.

The Committee discussed each of the risks with the Register and the actions undertaken to address each of the risks as follows:

- 1. Changing (evolving) emphasis of service delivery to Community safety**
Noted that the update of the contract and services provided by the Peterborough Volunteer Fire Brigade had been included in the draft Service Improvement Plan 2007/08.
- 2 Failure to comply with Government/legislative initiatives and/or National Projects e.g. Introduction of Regional Management Boards.**
- 4. Breaches of Existing legislation i.e. Health & Safety / Asbestos exposure / Legionella /Race Equality Scheme**
Noted that further work would be undertaken to identify the legislation giving rise to specific high risks areas (e.g. health and safety, compliance with race equality). This would be undertaken as part of the update of the Register by the Policy and Finance Committee.
- 3. National and/or local industrial action and 11. (i) Loss of reserves. (ii) Reduced service delivery. (iii) 3.High reputational impact.**
Noted that the Register would need to be updated to reflect that the government had advised that the military would not be available to provide any fire cover to address staff shortages caused by industrial action or flu pandemic. Members noted action taken by Merseyside FRS during recent industrial action and that the response of each Fire Authority to industrial action would be dependent on the mix of wholtime and retained staff and membership of the relevant trades unions. The Authority's response to both industrial action and a flu pandemic would be fundamentally the same and would be based on prioritizing and reducing the workload and deploying the resources available to best effect.

5. Failure of Risk Management

Noted that the embedding of risk management in management systems and performance plans was complete but that further work was required to develop action plans and monitor their implementation as part of the monitoring of the Strategic Risk Register. This would be addressed as part of the development of the new Register.

6. Failure to identify and respond to increases in demand for services

Noted that the required actions were substantially complete and that the Service Improvement Plan process would allow the Authority to respond to new demands on the service, based on the emergency response model. Members referred to the risk arising from the theft of equipment from fire stations and the risks this posed to the ability of appliances to respond to incidents. Members noted that a review of security arrangements had been undertaken and agreed that a report should be made to the Policy and Finance Committee on the implementation of improved security arrangements for fire stations.

7. Failure of key suppliers

Noted that this risk was significantly reduced as a result of the development of improved advice on procurement.

8. Inadequacy of financial budgets / reserves in the medium term

Noted that the Authority's budget and reserves were likely to be capable of meeting demands placed on them. The Committee agreed that this risk be reassessed following the approval of the Authority's budget for 2007/08.

10. Failure to avoid effects of financial crime (fraud, misuse, fiduciary)

Noted that arrangements for programme management would be implemented in early 2007/08, following training in March 2007.

12. Failure to proceed with major Property schemes.

Noted that the planning application for the redevelopment of Parkside Fire Station was subject to appeal and that risk would need to be reassessed once the outcome of the appeal was known.

The Committee noted the Risk Register and progress with actions to address the identified risks.

3. FIRE AUTHORITY PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2006/07 - FIRE AUTHORITY PLAN

The Committee has received an update on the Fire Authority's performance relating to its strategic priorities and performance indicators for the period April to December 2006.

Members noted that following concerns expressed by the Committee at the last meeting, the quality of the information received regarding performance was much improved.

Performance against key performance indicators was as follows:

Indicator	Actual April – Dec 2006	Target 2006/07
BV 143(i)– The number of deaths arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	0.40	0.07
BV 143(ii) - The number of injuries arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	2.27	1.74 (previous year to date)
BV 206(i) - The number of deliberate primary fires (excl vehicles) per 10,000 population	3.5	1.8
BV 206(ii) - The number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	5.4	6.3
BV 206(iii) - The number of deliberate secondary fires (excl vehicles) per 10,000 population	14.6	10.3
BV 206(iv) - The number of deliberate secondary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	0.6	2.1
BV 149(i) – False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1000 non-domestic properties	149.6	142.0
BV 207 Number of fires in non-domestic premises per 1000 non-domestic properties	10.9	8.5

The Committee scrutinised performance and received information on areas of under- performance against targets as well as significant issues in other areas. These included:

- Performance on the key indicator to reduce the number of injuries (BV143(ii)) arising from accidental dwelling fires had been re-assessed leading to a significant reduction in the number of injuries and consequent improvement in this indicator. Revised targets would be set based on the new data. Use would be made of MOSIAC to identify high risk groups and target community safety activity.
- Overall progress was being made to reduce the number of arson related fires (BV206(i) -(iv)), a significant proportion of which were in Peterborough, with hot spots in Wisbech and North Huntingdon. It was noted that an increase in the frequency of collections from wheelie bins in Peterborough may have increased the incidence of deliberate fires.

- The number of false alarms from automatic fire detection in non-domestic properties (BV149(i)) was slightly over target but that the introduction of a new protocol at Addenbrookes Hospital and the appointment of an officer specializing in reducing unwarranted alarm calls would reduce the number of call outs. A review of the Authority's attendance policy has been included in the Service Improvement Plan.

CHAIRMAN

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Documents	Location	Contact
Agenda, reports and minutes of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee – 18/01/07	Hinchingbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	Michael Brown 01480 444572 michael.brown@cambsfire.gov.uk