

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

11th JUNE 2012

1. REVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL ASSURANCE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Committee notes the update on progress of implementation of the Organisational Assurance recommendations.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT


This report is submitted to inform Members of progress to date on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on Organisational Assurance.






3. BACKGROUND



On 9th January 2012, the Audit & Performance Management Committee noted the contents and recommendations of the report that followed a review of Organisational Assurance.




4. PROGRESS AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS

The table below details progress to date and expected completion dates of work to fulfil the recommendations.

	Recommendation	Update	Status
1	Produce an Assurance Map that develops the Corporate Risk Register to enable provision of clear evidence of assurance and to provide a more robust indicator of areas which require developed assurance provided internally or externally.	The structure of the Assurance map and population with risks has been completed. An initial determination of risk scores is underway in collaboration with risk owners. The map will be used alongside the current Corporate Risk Register in the risk management review cycle starting in April 2012 in preparation for its complete adoption in June 2012 following the review cycle.	

2	To enable the provision of robust evidence at the second level of the proposed assurance map, a process should be developed which enables subject matter experts or specialists to come together with individuals with audit skills to conduct a clearly defined audit of a specific area which has raised concern or note at level 1 of the Assurance Map.	A framework for the development of the proposed local audit process has been established. This work will be undertaken by members of the SPIRiT team at the same time as the implementation of the assurance map in 1 above.	
3	a) The content and costs of the proposed 2012/13 Internal Audit Plan be rigorously examined with the intent of reducing the size of the plan whilst still providing appropriate assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's governance, risk management and internal control processes. This work should form the basis of a further report back to the Audit and Performance Committee in March 2012. b) On the appointment of the new external auditors, a review of the Authority's overall internal audit requirements, cost and provision should be undertaken.	The scope of the 2012/13 internal audit plan has been agreed. In April it was announced, subject to consultation that Grant Thornton had been awarded the contract for the delivery of the West Midlands lot for external audit services. This includes WMFRA. Consultation closes on 25 th May. Corporate Board have been consulted and see no reason why Grant Thornton's appointment should be opposed. All APMC members have been contacted by email to seek their views on this appointment. Subject to confirmation it is expected that Grant Thornton will take up the role on 1 st September 2012	
4	It is recommended that work to complete the debrief workbook is completed without delay.	This development is now complete.	
5	Develop peer review arrangements with comparable Metropolitan FRSS to provide external operational assurance.	The proposed peer review has been superseded by implementation of the Operational Assessment (OpA). We have requested an OpA peer challenge and this will be completed from 9 th to 11 th July 2012. In support of this, our Self Assessment has been compiled and will be made available to the peer review team on 28 th May 2012 after which it will also be made available to Members.	
6	A review of the provision of legal services should be undertaken. This will explore the full range of options available to ensure that efficiencies and value for money is achieved along with improved service provision.	This review has begun with a meeting of service users to determine the scope of the review. Further consultation is required with the Clerk of the Authority to agree next steps. This review was expected to conclude with recommendations by the end of May 2012. This timescale has been	

		delayed by other work commitments and this is now expected to conclude by the end of June 2012.	
7	Develop a process which enables feedback to be sent to an individual, highlighting inaccuracies in the output of their work, raising their awareness and asking for the work to be corrected. This will support 'the requirement to improve data quality through active support for right first time principles', and ensure responsibility for this is apportioned at the correct level. This will also support the detailed review of data quality being conducted by John Robb in the SPIRiT.	This task has been incorporated into the work of the more detailed review of data quality conducted by John Robb. This is now complete and an improvement plan has been developed to implement the recommendations.	
8	In order to ensure a clear and consistent approach to these developments, a review should be conducted into Standing Order 22/07 Corporate Risk Management and other relevant policies. This will include elected members' awareness, including their involvement in developing the necessary tools and policies. Managers whose input into the risk management processes is critical will also be involved in these developments to ensure that the developments are effective and appropriate for all concerned.	The requirements for amendments to supporting policies will follow the implementation of the recommendations above. These are expected to conclude by the end of June 2012.	

Status key;		
		Item complete
		Item behind schedule
		Item on schedule

5. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change and represent a progress update on previously agreed actions.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications from this report as it is an update on previously agreed actions.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications from this report as it is an update on previously agreed actions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

VIJ RANDENIYA
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER