

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**8<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2009**

**1. INTERNAL AUDIT – INTERNET USAGE AUDIT REPORT**

Report of the Audit Services Manager.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Internet usage Audit Report be noted.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT.**

- 2.1 To ask the Committee to note the issues raised from the internet usage audit undertaken by Internal Audit in 2008/9.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the request of the Treasurer we undertook a review of the practices and procedures in place over the use of the internet within the Fire Authority.
- 3.2 With nearly 4,000 users, ensuring that the internet is used productively, in accordance with WMFS policies is a fundamental necessity. Since the previous audit of this service, significant investment has been made in installing automated tools (Websense) that control the content of websites that users can access. These produce an audit trail (log) of all internet activity, showing which sites were accessed, which has been blocked and what subjects users have searched for.

The audit concentrated on analysing a sample period of log entries in order to determine how well these controls were operating and generally, to identify whether there were any issues that management should be aware of / take further action on.

- 3.3 Six significant and five merits attention recommendations were made following the review, resulting in a 'limited assurance' opinion being given. Recommendations were made covering the following issues:

- The Authority should agree the scope, period and responsibility for a regular analysis of the internet logs. Audit recommended that this be at least monthly.
- All system generated Alerts should be promptly examined and appropriate action taken and documented.
- All Generic Accounts should be migrated to specifically named accounts.
- A review of the general single sign-on policy should be undertaken, outlining both benefits and potential weaknesses.
- A review should be conducted to ensure threshold levels are set to appropriate values and, where generated, Alerts are fully & accurately evidenced by the log entries.
- The Authority should decide upon whether sites such as Facebook will be permitted (ie. Not blocked), what conditions of use should be adhered to (ie. Not during working time) and to ensure that all staff are aware of this policy.

The recommendations were discussed with management and appropriate actions agreed as shown in the report Action Plan.

#### 4. **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 will not lead to and/or do not relate to a policy change.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations Act states that a relevant body must “maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper internal audit practices”.

#### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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