

Minutes of the Audit and Performance Management Committee

7th March 2011 at 1.30 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Turner (Chair);
Councillors Docker, and A Hill.
Mr Ager (Independent Member).

Also Present: Councillor Douglas-Maul (Lead Member Performance
Management)

Apology: Councillor Clinton.

7/11 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meetings held on 29th
November 2010 and 10th January 2011 be confirmed as a
correct record.

8/11 **Revision of Internal Audit Plan**

Members were informed that audits of Long Term Planning and Health and Safety had been included in the Internal Audit Plan for 2010/2011. However, it was now proposed to remove these two items from the plan.

The review of Long Term Planning had been included at the request of the Audit Commission. However, following discussions regarding the scope of such a review the Commission was of the view, that if no immediate risks had been identified, the audit would no longer be required. This review would therefore be removed from the Internal Audit Plan and returned to the Audit Universe where it would form a part of future Audit Needs Assessments and would be risk scored each year and put back into the plan should the risk increase.

The purpose of the audit of Health and Safety was to review the management of Health and Safety systems, with an emphasis on organisational responsibilities, health and safety policy, planning and training for health and safety and control measures, such as risk assessments and safe working which had been embedded to mitigate

Audit and Performance Management Committee – 7th March 2011

risk. In addition it was to focus on progress in the implementation of recommendations by other agencies, and an overview of the assurance that the Committee could obtain from these. Corporate Board members had expressed however that the audit was not required for the following reasons:

- There were many other sources of assurance relating to Health and Safety, including peer reviews, self assessments, ROSPA awards, policies and procedures etc.
- Performance data and indicators produced were being reviewed by the SAG (Strategic Advisory Group).
- A national report produced in October 2010 by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) contained recommendations that the Authority considered to be applicable to all other authorities. The recommendations concentrated on training and maintenance of core skills for fire fighters and all officers and this was currently the main health and safety focus for WMFS.
- Health and Safety was currently determined within the audit plan as a medium risk and therefore subject to review on a once every three year cycle. As the Authority's Health and Safety arrangements were subject to a detailed, accredited, external peer review/self assurance process via the Operational Assessment process in February/March 2009 it was felt that an additional assessment of the Health and Safety arrangements within the 2010/2011 calendar year was not required.

The amendments would not impact upon Internal Audit's ability to provide a year end audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control processes. However, their non-completion would need to be recorded in the opinion statement.

Resolved that approval be given to the removal of audits in relation to Long Term Planning and Health and Safety from the Internal Audit Plan 2010/2011.

9/11

An Analysis of Progress of Corporate Performance Against 'The Plan' – Quarter Three 2010/2011

The Committee noted performance against key indicators and progress made in delivery of objectives contained within 'The Plan' for the third quarter of 2010/2011.

The Service was improving and meeting targets across a range of indicators. However, there were four areas where performance was below target:-

Audit and Performance Management Committee – 7th March 2011

- accidental dwelling fires
- false alarm calls due to automatic fire alarms in dwellings
- dwelling fires where a working smoke alarm was fitted

Members enquired as to the appropriateness of the current target in relation to accidental dwelling fires in view of the economic downturn. Members were assured that it was not anticipated that the target would change, despite reduced resources, and targeted prevention and protection work would continue. The Service had a good relationship with registered social landlords and effective partnerships were in place to support the focus of resources.

It was noted that the revised protocol on responding to automatic fire alarm calls would reduced attendance at such calls.

The Lead Member for Performance Management assured the Committee that utmost effort was being made to meet targets set out in The Plan and that positive dialogue was taking place with partnership agencies on prevention and protection work.

10/11 Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Statement on the Role of Head of Internal Audit

The Committee noted a CIPFA publication which set out a number of principles relevant to the role of Head of Internal Audit.

A detailed review of the Authority's compliance with the principles would be incorporated into the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit and reported back to the Committee in June 2011.

11/11 Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Update No. 4

The Committee noted CIPFA Audit Committee Update No. 4 entitled "Helping Audit Committees to be Effective".

12/11 Update on Topical, Legal and Regulatory Issues

There were no updates.

Audit and Performance Management Committee – 7th March 2011

13/11 **Work Programme 2010/11**

The Committee noted its work programme for 2010/2011.

(The meeting ended at 2.15 pm)

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